

E

601

.S77



Class E601

Book -577

PRESENTED BY

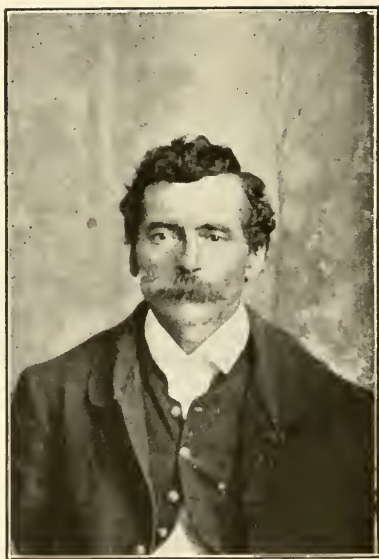
60
ES 1

533
7002

BUY his book and read his story,
Every word of which is true.
He fought bravely for Old Glory
That its folds might shelter you.

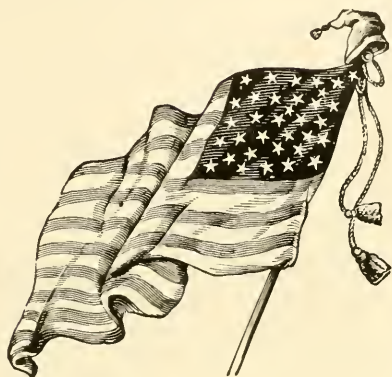
H. C. STAFFORD,
Captain of Company C,
Eighty-Third Pennsylvania Volunteers.

Erie, Pa., Aug 25, 1903.



DAVID W. STAFFORD.

IN DEFENSE OF THE FLAG.



A TRUE WAR STORY

(ILLUSTRATED.)

A Pen Picture of Scenes and Incidents during the
Great Rebellion.—Thrilling Experiences During
Escape from Southern Prisons, Etc.

By DAVID W. STAFFORD.

All Rights to this Story Reserved by David W. Stafford of Company D,
Eighty-Third Pennsylvania Volunteers

1904.
IHLLING BROS. & EVERARD, PRINTERS,
KALAMAZOO, MICH.



HENRY LEDIERER.

Oct. 29 Feb. 12

A True War Story.

By David W. Stafford.

N



OW IN THE commencement of this narrative and tale of my early life, I must say that a good part of my life has been somewhat gloomy. At the time of my entering the service of my country I was seventeen years of age. It was just after the first and second engagements at Bull Run.

My father was a poor man, the father of some nine children, and a shoemaker by trade. I had left home early in my youth, when about fourteen or fifteen years old, and at this time, just before the war, a boy's chances for labor and wages paid were very small. I worked for only seven dollars a month. This was the first labor I ever performed, working by the month. Oh, how my mind goes back to childhood days !

Now in the fall of 1862, on the 28th day of August. I felt it my duty to respond to my country's call, and I enlisted in the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, to serve three years.

After I had been some two years in the service, my brother, two years younger than myself, enlisted and came to the army at Rappahannock Station, on the Rappahannock River. Now I had written a good many letters home to my poor brother, advising him not to come to the army, but it was of no avail. He would and did come, but I have

reason to thank God that it was his own good will, and that my brother's life blood was not shed in vain for his country, although I did try my best to have him stay at home.

Soon after he came to the regiment and was placed in the same company with me, I was detailed to go on picket duty. Very shortly thereafter I became injured while assisting in the building of rifle pits at night and was sent from our headquarters to Washington. I had previous to this been through all of the engagements from the Antietam war, where we first found the regiment. I had participated in all of the engagements, such as the first and second Fredericksburg battles and the Chancellorsville battle, or "Stick in the Mud," and the Culpepper battle and Mine Run, and at this place it certainly did seem as though we run, for we retreated clear beyond Manassas Junction, in the direction of Washington, and we could not stop long enough to steep our coffee without getting shelled from the rebel batteries. For six miles, on what was called the stone pike, we double marched, and it did seem as though the rebels were destined to lick us every time we met them. I had, up to the time of my brother's coming into the army, participated in all of the engagements that our regiment had been called into.

There is one thing that I recall to memory very distinctly. It is the incident of our camping on the battle field of Bull Run, on our retreat from Mine Run, near the Rappahannock River. Near this run the rebels had very strong fortifications thrown up. Now on the battle field of Bull Run our dead had just been covered—a great many by the enemy—on top of the ground, and so shallow that the bones of thousands of the dead, skulls and all others, lay on top of the ground. Oh, how sad it did seem to wake in the morning to find the country strewn with human bones for miles around, and it is one thing that I can't forget very soon.

I had gone over the ground in the direction of Bull Run, and very close to the run, studded with trees, sat the skeleton of one of our Indiana men against a large elm tree, just as he had died one year before. I called the attention of the officers to this spectacle. The skeleton was in a sitting posture, the flesh having entirely disappeared, and on the ground lay his blue clothes. On the arms of the clothes were the emblems showing the sergeant's stripes and the number of his company and regiment. One of the officers just touched his sabre under the chin of this skeleton and it fell all to pieces. I thought this a wonderful sight.

Now after my injury at Rappahannock Station, of which I have already spoken, and being sent to Washington, I stayed in Lincoln hospital. Here I was treated some two months and was sent home on a seventeen days' furlough, when the Battle of the Wilderness came on. This was the first battle that my poor young brother had ever been in. As our troops were charging on the enemy's works for the third or fourth time, my brother fell, pierced through the right thigh, and another ball passed through the shoulder very close to the heart. After the battle he lay on the field eight hours before he was finally taken to Alexandria, near Washington, and here he was placed in what was called the Haywood church. This church had been made over into a hospital in which to place the wounded soldiers.

I had not been home but a few days at this time. As soon as I found on the list of the wounded that my brother had been hurt, I went back to Washington and returned to Lincoln hospital, from which place I had received my furlough. I was very uneasy until I got a pass to go to Alexandria, where my poor brother lay dying of his wound, received in the Battle of the Wilderness. On receiving the pass and arriving at Alexandria I stayed two days. I found

on leaving my poor brother that his stay in this world was very short. I went to headquarters and called for another pass and told them of the condition of my brother. They told me if I was able to travel back and forth to the city that they would send me to the front and ordered me to go back to the barracks until the next morning at ten o'clock, and, oh, with what a sad heart I spent the night, scarcely sleeping, and then to think of the suffering my poor wounded brother would have to endure! It made my heart ache as I thought of his parting words. While at his bedside he told me of a good old lady nurse who had told him of his Lord and Saviour, how He had died to redeem him, and, oh, how happy he was in all of his suffering! He would point me to the kind old nurse, tell me how much she had told him about his Creator, and it was wonderful what faith he had in God. He would tell me how much the old nurse reminded him of our mother. He told me if he could only see our poor old mother he could die contented. Oh, what sad hours these were to me! I would go out on the street to pass away the time. I felt so sad after I started to leave him and to think of his last words, when he would look up and say, "David, don't be gone as long as you were before." I think I saw him twice before he passed away.

Now comes almost the saddest part of my life. The next morning dawned and at nine o'clock there were collected before the doctor's office twenty men to be looked over and sent to the front, myself being included. Some were pronounced able for duty and some were sent across the Potomac River, three miles from Alexandria, where my dear brother lay dying of his wounds.

Just as soon as I got to this distributing camp I went straight to headquarters for a pass to go to Alexandria, three miles away, and see my brother, as I thought, for the last

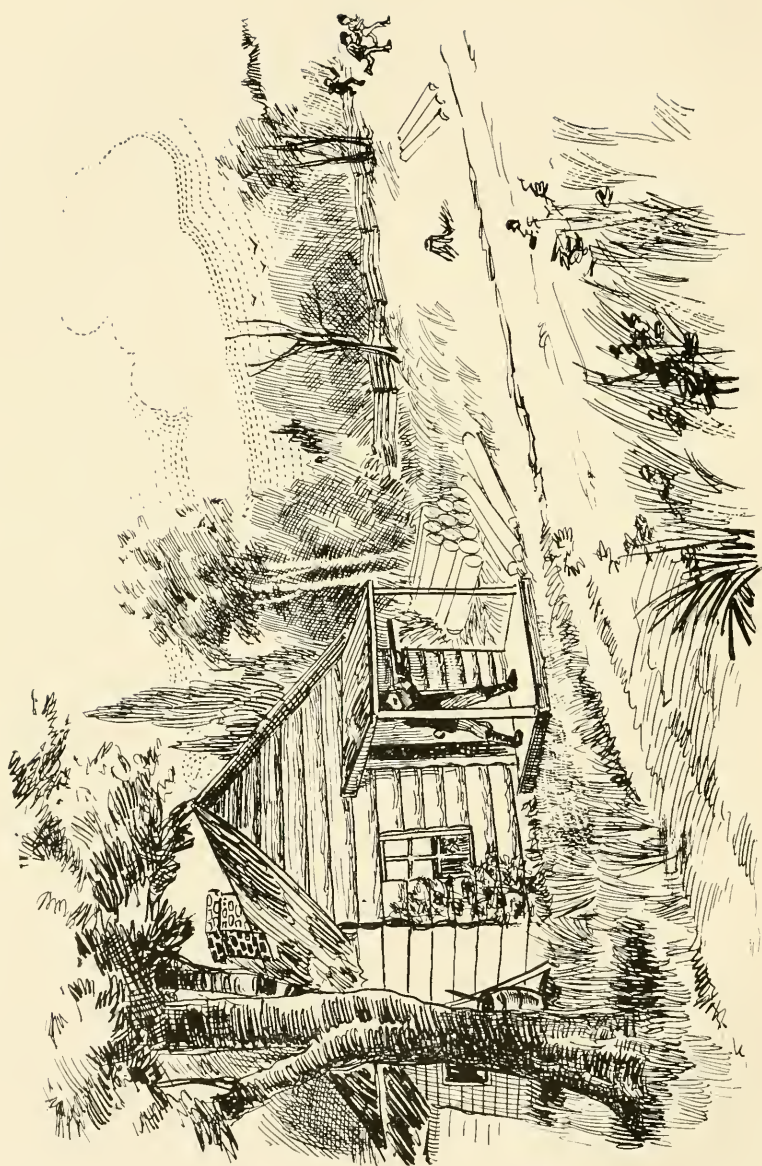
time. I could see the spires from where I was. Well, I went and laid the matter before the commander at this place and told him of the condition of my brother and plead in tears for him to let me go to him. He told me that there were passes ahead of my request, and with all of my pleading I could not get a pass under two or three days. Well, I went around in the enclosure of the distributing camp, which was surrounded with a fence ten or twelve feet high. At the south side there was a piece of a board off, about two feet in length, and through this I finally made my way and started for the city, taking the chances of the guards shooting me. They halted, then followed me some distance, but I got to the city, and with a good deal of trouble I finally got through the guard lines that surrounded the town and went to the church where my brother was, but, oh, what a surprise awaited me! At the door or entrance I found the hospital steward and the old lady who had cared for and shown my poor brother the way to his Redeemer, and on entering to where the couch was I found to my sorrow that he had died the day before and was laid in the cemetery to rest, and it is difficult to tell what a sad night I put in that night, lying on the same couch where my poor brother had died, and thinking of what the next day would bring forth, and knowing that I had deserted from the camp. It indeed was a sad night to me, yet with my faith and trust in God I was in hopes that I would not be punished for deserting camp. Oh, how this continued to haunt me through the night; And the loss of my poor brother! All this made me very sad, indeed. Well, when morning dawned I went and gave myself up to the guards and returned to camp, and to tell you the truth, this seemed like a hopeless trip. I finally arrived at camp and went before the commander. He well remembered my pleading a day or two before and wanted to

know if I understood what deserting would do to me if brought to trial. I told him I did. "Well, young man," said he, "did you find your brother?" In this talk to me I broke down and told him plainly of finding his empty couch and of the sad night I had spent, and he told me to go to my quarters. "Young man, it is all right. I would have done the same thing myself." This seemed to lift a great weight off me. I went to the barracks with a light heart then.

I will soon commence relating the tale of my confinement in the rebel prison and the story of my escape. After the death of my brother I had no desire to stay longer near Washington or Alexandria, but I wanted to go to the front and get into the battles for my country, and if need be die for it. I did indeed feel sad at heart at this time. Soon there came an order for the men who were able to bear arms to turn out, for part of Longstreet's corps had come to Washington while Gen. Grant was at Richmond, to see if the rebels could not take Washington. While our army was trying to take Richmond the enemy came up on the Baltimore Pike and got almost into Washington. Here we had a very severe battle, which ended in our driving out the rebels from the city of Washington.

Now soon after our trouble with the enemy, we were sent by transport to Richmond. Here, in rifle pits and bumphoofs and from forts, we had some very severe cannonading. We charged each other until we were called to go on a reconnoitering trip on the south side of Richmond and south of Petersburg, on what was called the Weldon railroad. This road we tore up and continued to hold it against all the odds that could be brought to bear against us.

Now there was one other thing that occurred prior to what I have just written that comes to my mind. This incident occurred at Chancellorsville, on the south side of



Fredericksburg, just after the first and second battles of Fredericksburg, while we lay in line, and more severe fighting never occurred at this place. For the time being the battle waged fierce and warm. Now what I mention this for is this: We had orders to get ready for a general inspection of arms and all charges in the guns were to be withdrawn. In front of us there was heavy timber, and perched in the trees were many sharpshooters, ready to shoot any of our men who raised their heads above the line of fortifications that we occupied. We had orders to draw all the loads from our guns and I had tried to obey but could not get the charge in my rifle dislodged. I had to get a special instrument, called a wormer, placed on the end of my ramrod to take the ball from my gun. Well, I had got one of these wormers fast in my weapon and I spoke to my captain in regard to my firing the gun. He told me that Col. S. Strong Vincon, our colonel, had given orders for every man to draw the charge from his gun and be ready for inspection, as they must fire their guns. I told him what shape my gun was in and told him in order to unload it I would have to pick some powder and fire it in the fortifications, and did so. The colonel came very soon and looked at each gun close to where I was. Soon he took my gun and raised the hammer and blew in the nozzle. The smoke came out of the tube and he ordered me to climb on the fortifications there and remain for two hours or until he would have me come down. This was supposed to be one of the rashest things that any of our commanding officers had ever done. Well, I had nothing else to do but to obey the colonel and I had no sooner gotten fairly on the line of the works than the enemy's sharpshooters commenced firing at me. Here is one place in my life where I knew that I was being fired at, and if there was one shot fired I believe there were thirty.

Captain Woodard of our Company went right after the colonel and told him that he had command of Company D and he would either take that man from those works or either one or the other would die, and while they were contending over the matter I came down off the works. Well the next battle that occurred was at Gettysburg, in my own native state, and here the colonel was shot by sharpshooters and died in a few hours. Thus ends this thrilling experience.

Now I will, by the help of the all-wise God, proceed to relate another sad picture of my life and the story of my capture and confinement in southern hells, called stockade prisons. Now, as I should have given the date of my enlistment, also of my capture, I will say that I entered the army on the 28th day of August, 1862, in Company D, Eighty-Third Regiment, commanded by S. Strong Vincon, of Erie county, Pennsylvania, and our company commander was Captain O. S. Woodard, of Waterford, Erie county, Pennsylvania. At the battle of the Weldon Railroad, while on outside picket, I was taken prisoner, with many others, and carried to Macon state prison and was confined in this prison about two weeks. This was the first prison in which I was ever confined. This prison is just ten miles from Andersonville. Now for about two days before we got to this place, we had about one day's rations of corn meal issued to us, with about four ounces of bacon, and this bacon was nearly rotten. I felt that I must let my friends know where I was confined, for my poor mother, after the death of my brother, had mourned his loss so much that she nearly died. What I wished to do was to get a letter to my captain. I knew that this would soon be sent home and would let my folks know where I was. I observed in this prison a man who had formerly been a Union man and whom the rebels had drafted into the southern service. He wrote a very few lines for me,

and while he wrote he told me that he had been pressed into the rebel army, but just as soon as an opportunity presented itself he deserted and had been court-marshaled and was sentenced to be shot the next day at ten o'clock. Yet he wrote a very fine letter and told me that he had friends that he expected would help him out. We were at this time in the outside yard to the prison. Some sixteen feet of wall surrounded us, the top of which was covered with glass. Now when we all fell in line it seems there was a box close to a large flight of stairs that led up to the second floor. This man said to me that his cell mate, if I remember right, was to shove this box, which had an open end, up to the wall as he passed close by after he had been placed in behind. The cell mate was to answer to the call of both names. This was very successfully performed and the next morning when the prisoners were let into the yard the fact revealed itself, that the condemned man had disappeared. This man was a Northern man who had a good lot of property in Georgia, and had not left as soon as he should have done. Like many others, his property was confiscated, and I don't know whether he got away or not. My prayers were that he did and I hoped and prayed that God might lead me in all that I might do in order that I might continue to write and work for others. I now realize that this life is closing very rapidly.

While we were confined in this prison our fare was about twelve ounces of corn bread for a day's ration and about four ounces of bacon. We were kept here about three weeks and then sent to Andersonville prison. Now when we arrived here we were soon visited by Captain Wirz, the commander of this prison. We were left in the hot Georgia sun for some time before we were taken inside. This Captain Wirz was a very cruel man, for he would take the life of a helpless prisoner upon the slightest provocation. We did some com-

plaining because we were not taken inside the stockade, and soon Wirz found that we were dissatisfied about being obliged to remain in the hot sun. At the time of our capture we had been stripped of all our clothing, except shirt and drawers; no shoes, not even a cap to our heads. When we were taken prisoners we were captured by Colonel Masfies' guerrillas, and it was known that these men did not spare many prisoners' lives. Now, as I was saying, we were lying in the hot southern sun, wondering why they did not take us inside. Captain Wirz came along and with much cursing told us that we would get in there soon enough. We soon found out that in this he was telling the truth, if he never had before, for I say he was a very bad man. It was well known that he was the cause of thousands starving to death at Andersonville through his orders. Now I must say that we soon realized what a place it was in which we had to stay. It was the saddest and the most sickly place that I or any human being could conceive. Here we met with the most ghastly sights that eyes could ever behold, for there were fathers, sons and kindred, of both North and South confined in this prison hell, starving to death, with no eye, as it seemed, to pity, and in tattered rags, and hundreds without a rag to cover their backs, and men found walking in the sluggish stream that ran through this stockade from the north to the south side, waiting for the water to get clear, which never did. I often think of these starving souls, and how it is that there were not more lunatics than there were. Right here I want to speak of the great spring that broke out on the northeast side of the prison, near the north gate, and all in answer to prayers to God. Oh, how often I now think of the wonderful prayer meetings, and oh, with what power did the real saints of God prevail through Christ, the Lord Jesus. I do thank God in later years that I have

learned to trust fully in Him. Now think of poor suffering humanity living on less than one pint of field peas for a day's rations for nearly thirteen months! Such was the suffering of many in this prison, and how often I have thought how little one man's experience was, considering the vast suffering in this place. Oh, this is a sad thing to contemplate, but in my old age and the crippled condition of my body, and mental and bodily suffering, I have been led to write up for the last time, a true story of my life and suffering.

There has not been a moment of time the last four years, coming April 28th, that I haven't suffered almost untold agony from a severe fall from a basement barn, which unjointed and broke my left hip and caused other internal injuries, from which I can never recover.

Now there were many things that happened in Andersonville that have never gone down in history, simply because there were many things that were not generally known. There is the story of the hanging of the six men, and such things that are known by almost every man who was not there at the time, but now comes three men for their rations of the rebel sergeant, two brothers and a father. Well, very soon the poor old man gets sick and becomes so bad that he cannot rise from the cold, damp ground. Soon the scurvy takes hold of him, with many other bodily ailments. His sons are then called on to get his rations. The rebel sergeant thinks it is some Yankee trick. He was the rebel police who was always on hand at the time of issuing Yankee rations. We used to remark that they were so very delicious you could smell them at least ten rods. You knew they were coming if you were on the windward side, because they were cooked up some two or three days ahead of dealing out and of course they would ferment and get sour. Now these were steamed in very large lots, in two bushel

sacks, and emptied into a large army cart drawn by a three mule team. As I was saying, here goes the two sons for their own and their father's rations. You would think it very cruel if you had been in their place and had just got less than one pint, and then have those rebel guards beset you as they did those poor boys and almost kill you for asking for a small bit of stuff that you would not be guilty of giving to your dog, for surely he would not eat it unless he were nearly starving. Then to see the rebel guards without any earthly excuse shoot men clear across the prison merely for pastime to let the southern ladies see how good and correct they shoot, killing poor praying men. These are sad pictures, but they are nevertheless true. And to think of men catching a small dog belonging to Wirz while he with Jeff Davis were inspecting the prison, and skinning and eating it, and to punish them would make them go three days without rations. I have seen men fight for a chance to carry out dead men to get a little fresh air. Now I feel that I should not linger much longer with these sad scenes, but hasten to the story of my final escape from the rebel prison.

Now along late in the fall came a report that Sherman was on his way; that is, General Sherman, to release all of the prisoners of Andersonville prison and at Macon. The rebels had sent papers to the prison, stating that they were going to take us to the nearest point of exchange. This they did so that we would not try to escape, while being removed to other quarters. Soon after this, in a very few days, there came a rush of cars, and they put us aboard of these trains, composed of box cars, and we were crowded into bacon and cattle cars. As many as seventy-five or eighty of these poor starving men were put into one of these box cars and sent to different quarters of the South. Now at this time General Sherman was near Macon, about ten miles away—when they

sent the last train load of us away from Andersonville, and all the way we plainly saw the devastation of burned and destroyed railroads and stations. It seemed that the extent of the destruction was for over forty miles, and here our progress was very slow and tedious. The train moved very slowly over all of this new road, and while passing along through this country the rebels would stop the train once in a while, to our great relief, and open the car doors to let the people see the Yankees, who were quite a sight for those Southern people. They would stand and gaze at us with great curiosity, and I have no doubt it was a great sight for them, for there were men in all conceivable shapes, without a rag to cover their backs. Many of them were the hardest looking sights, I do believe, that my eyes ever beheld, and at one of those small stations there was quite a large gathering of people and a large company of young boys, who had just been conscripted into the rebel service. Here they all stood to see the great train load of Yankee prisoners.

Right here something occurred that I can't forget very soon. The large car doors had been shoved back and here stood the gazing and gaping crowd looking us over and asking all sorts of questions, and many of them were eating melons and apples, and they would throw the peelings and cores in to us. There was one saucy appearing rough who threw a cud of tobacco in the face of a tall looking veteran. He was close to the car door and it went in his eyes. He could not take this insult, and he jumped from the train to resist it and trampled this young rebel nearly to death, but he understood that he would be paid for his rash act with his life, for there were many rebels on each car with loaded guns. Just as soon as any of the prisoners attempted to leave the trains they were shot down without mercy. Oh, how many there were who tried to escape from the train

and were shot down by the rebels guarding the train! We were carried from Andersonville to Charleston City, and here they ran us under the fire of our own guns and there were some severe shots fired at the train load of prisoners. There were quite a few shots that hit some of the cars, but soon the firing ceased. I think that it was soon learned that it was not an enemy reinforcement. Here they kept us in some large tobacco houses when it was learned that during the two or three days we had been in the box cars, so many in each car, and so close that there was not sitting room for them all. As I said before, there were seventy-five or eighty in one car. Some one had sawed a hole in the bottom of the car that we were placed in, which let us have more air than we would otherwise have had. It was a sad sight to see from eight to ten poor fellows taken out of each car half suffocated.

After our journey up to the unloading here at Charleston City it was wonderful to see the devastated condition of this place. There were many buildings that were falling from the solid shot that was being thrown into them from our bombarding army.

The next day we were all placed on board of the cars once more and started in the direction of Florence, South Carolina, one hundred miles from this city. Here we were once more unloaded and placed in a ten acre lot, for the stockade was not completed, which was thought would have been completed in about two weeks. Here again we found that our looked for exchange was still another bull pen, or a Southern prison hell and worse. There were all of the same Andersonville bloodhounds and Captain Wirz, the old commander, here to give us chase as soon as any of us should try to escape. We had been here, surrounded by two lines of guards and a line of pickets, for about five days, when the

rebels let out a large company between the guard lines, and they broke through the next line and got away, three or four hundred, and many got as far as the Peedee River, some thirty-four miles away. Nearly all were caught and chewed up by the hounds and shot so that there were not more than one-fourth of them ever brought back alive.

Henry Ledierer, an old comrade and bugler of the eighty-third regiment, and of company C, of this regiment, the same one that I belonged to, and who was with me while in Andersonville prison, was with me here at this Florence prison. He was one to get away from here and was one to get as far as the big Peedee River, some thirty-four miles from the prison, and if I remember right was caught and brought back some three days later. He was caught by a southern planter, who had been warned by the rebels of the break that had been made by the prisoners. Henry had brought back some eight or ten pounds of corn hoccake and he and myself concluded that if we could get a chance we would get away just as soon as we could. The day soon came, for it commenced to rain the next day after Henry got back, and when night came we made ready and crawled out through the first guard line, and then we laid in wait for a Northern squad of about a hundred and fifty men who were let out through the first line for water near the bull pen which they had not completed yet, and when these men got outside of the first line of guards, there lay just outside of the next line a lot of the sick on the ground with nothing but the canopy of heaven to cover or shelter them from the storm. We finally fell in with this working squad and passed out through the second line here. Just as soon as we came to where the sick lay it was understood that we would fall out among the sick without being seen by the enemy, and we were successful in doing this. And now came the picket

line and if it had not been for their reckless picket fire we never would have succeeded in our escape. We finally got through their picket line and traveled all night until morning began to dawn, when we had to find some place to conceal ourselves. But it had been a bad night for us.

We had got out of the prison, but to tell in what direction to go was the next thing to consider. Well, we were guided by the railroad station lights until we got out of sight of the stations, then as we had nothing to guide us we had to do the best we could. It still continued to rain until we had traveled all night, when we found ourselves in sight of the very prison that we had left early in the evening. This was a surprise, for we had traveled nearly eight hours, and to find ourselves within three miles of the very prison that we were trying to get away from. Surely it made us feel sad enough.

As I was saying, the day was about at hand and the next thing to do was to find some place in which to conceal ourselves until night should close in, and while we were still looking we soon came to a large stack of corn fodder, and in this we crawled and remained until night again. Late in and during our first night's travel we found nothing to subsist on, but Henry had a small amount of hoecake that he had brought back with him, but which was now all gone, and there was no water near us. We were so close to the prison we could see the encampment. Oh, what a day of suspense, with these Holland bloodhounds running in almost all directions, hunting the trail that the rain had washed out. For this we had reasons to thank God. When night set in we started again, and the rain that had continued to fall had now let up for a time and the stars came out. It had been very rainy for two days and nights. Now we felt glad to have

star light for we had studied out the small clump of stars called the small dipper and also the north star.

Now this night we had before us about thirty miles before we came to the Big Peedee River. This river runs nearly north and south. Well, we traveled as fast as we could, keeping very shy of any inhabitants, for in South Carolina it is very difficult to find a Union man.

We found some sweet potatoes on our way to help us along.

Praise God! How much I think of the little faith we had in God at that time, but I am sure He cared for and protected us.

Well, just before dawn the second night we came in hearing of the roaring of the river, for this river had several large falls in it, and you could hear the sound of them before you came within a mile or so of them. We came to the water's edge. We had no sooner got on the bank of the river than we discovered that the rebels were in pursuit of us, for we could hear the faint baying of hounds. This almost made our hearts quake, for Henry Ledierer had told me the reason that he did not try to swim the river was because the fellow who was with him could not swim and he himself was a very poor swimmer. Now this was very discouraging, for the river was at least three-quarters of a mile across and overflowed the banks nearly a half mile in two or three feet of water. But we must start, for the hounds came closer and closer each delayed moment. We plunged in. I had it understood that we must swim a western course down stream so that the current would help us in gaining the other side. Now it remained for us to get the hounds between us and the river so that we could get out of the way of pursuit as far as possible, but what was my surprise to find my comrade could not swim against the current of the river. I had

got some ten rods ahead, when I found that he was floating down stream with the current. Oh, how sad I felt to think the hounds were almost heaving in sight and that my poor comrade, whom I had decided to stand by in every place possible until death should separate us, struggling in the angry billows. Now it seemed that the time had arrived, for he had already called to me that he could not go any farther, and had sank once below the current, and just as I reached him he went under again. I reached out my cane that somehow I had kept in my left hand. He caught it like any drowning man would, and it was all I could do to keep him from drowning both of us. Well we got ashore just as the rebels came in sight. They had been looking for some of our men ever since the break to pick up if they could any stragglers Yankees who had not yet been captured. We were now destined to a few days of severe chasing, if not capture, for there were in pursuit of us four or five mounted rebels and three of the Andersonville bloodhounds. During all of this day and most of the night we had been pursued along this river, and during the day we were compelled to cross the river the third time to keep from being captured. What suffering, without anything to eat! We began to get very hungry and weak, still we kept on late in the night. For three days and a good part of the night we were beset by these hounds, when in the afternoon of the third day the blast of the horns and the baying of the hounds ceased. For some distance we had traveled among the elm timber along the river flats. Finally we came to a road which led off to the left from the river, and we thought we would follow this road. Just at this time there came a sudden blast of a horn, and, looking in the direction of the sound, we saw an old gray-headed negro with a white horse coming in our direction, who was beckoning to us to listen. He went on to tell

us that the rebels had given up pursuit of us, and he had been close to them and to us most all day, and that his old master was in hopes that we would not be taken. We did not want to believe him, for we had come to the conclusion that most all South Carolians were bad rebels and we felt rather suspicious of any one who would speak a kind word for a white man. It showed the darkey to be a kind old man and he told me in his old southern way, "Why, massy, for de lobe of de Lord, I would not tell you a lie." Well I must say that he induced us to stay in the woods concealed in the thicket, and he went away making us a promise that he would be back soon with something for us to eat. I told Henry that I would go over near the road in the direction from whence he would come and stay until he arrived, and would find out whether he meant us any harm or not. Soon I came back again. The poor old man went away singing in a low voice some tune, and I went back to where Henry was. We waited, satisfied that he was a friend in need. At this time it was about nine or ten o'clock in the evening and when the old darkey showed up he had brought two large hoe cakes and some nice stewed bacon in one of those small stew kettles, and some of the new sorghum cane syrup. Now if ever we were thankful for anything in this wide world we were for this kindness shown us by this poor old pilgrim, whom I believe was God's own messenger. Now we sat and ate and talked and told the old man of how we had suffered in rebel prisons and many other things, and this poor old man told us that his master was a good Union man and that he would like to see us. This we did not desire to do, as we did not care to meet any white man. We told the old darkey that we feared to meet with his old master, and all the darkey could say, would not induce us to go to the plantation. So we stayed concealed in the forest for three days, with

nothing to protect us from the cold, damp nights except a large amount of leaves that I had gathered up to lay in.

Now this reminds me that I did not give the date of my capture and of my getting away. It must have been about the first of August. I was taken in the fall of 1864. Henry was taken about the time of the Battle of the Wilderness. Now, the time of our escape was about the middle of November, and I tell you it was at this time getting to be very cold nights. Well, once a day, up to the third night, the old man continued to come and bring something for us to eat, and the third night he came he urged so hard to go to the plantation that we concluded to go with him. When we got to the plantation barn we found two other men there. One of them was an Irishman and the other a Frenchman. Both of them had been concealed here for over a week. They were both from the same prison, but we found out very soon that we did not want anything to do with them for the old darkey brought four large hoecakes to be divided, each to have one a piece, but the Irishman broke one in two and gave Henry and I half of one a piece, and he and the Frenchman took the other three. This we told the old darkey and he brought enough to make it all right the next morning, and I and Henry concluded that we never would travel a mile with them if we could help it. So we found out the next morning that the old planter had looked in on us when the darkey brought us our food for the last night of our stay at this plantation, for it was understood that the next day was Sunday, the first Sunday that we had known for a long time, and the old planter was going to church. Our old friend, the darkey, was going to ferry us across the river again for another start for our lines. The next day dawned very beautiful and our sleep in the planter's barn was very good and undisturbed.

Just as soon as the old planter had gone to church the old colored man took us all to the river, where the little and big Peedee Rivers join, and here he ferried us across. Now this boat in which we were carried was one that the old man stood up in and used his paddle in the stern end, and as soon as we got across the river we concluded to separate from the other two fellows and travel alone. It was our intention not to travel any at all by day, if we could only avoid it, and to get away from the two fellows who had taken our hoe-cake was our desire.

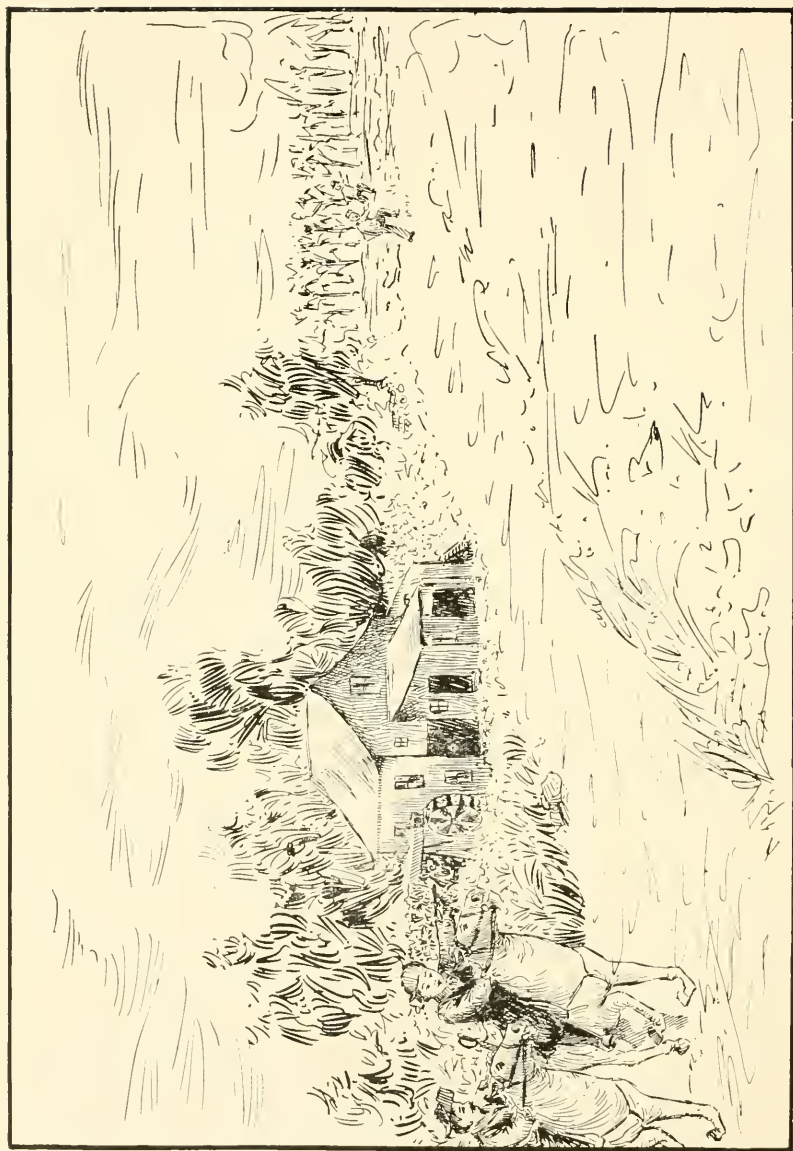
We had traveled but a short distance when we came to a public road. There were about ten or fifteen negroes on this road. The Irishman wanted apple jack, and it seemed that to get a hold of this apple brandy was the most he desired. So he and the Frenchman went to the road, and, calling to the darkies, told them what their desire was, and from the chuckling of the darkies we came to the conclusion from what we heard that it would not be long before they would get something that they were not looking for, for at the time of the break at the Florence prison the country was aroused and armed, and they told the negroes that the Yankee man was so powerful that he would eat up a black man. The people were all armed for miles around and as soon as they would tree any of our men they would shoot them out of the trees as fast as they would come to them. Now this superstition had spread all over the country, and it was nothing but the most intelligent class who would be ready to help capture and kill these flying fugitives. They would kill them for pastime and amusement.

Now as soon as it was understood by the Irishman and his chum that they would soon be supplied with apple jack, they waited until the return of the darkies, and it was not longer than half or three-quarters of an hour before we heard

the sound of hounds and the blast of horns. We knew well enough what this all meant, and just as soon as these fellows met the darkies we started in the direction of the river again and made as fast progress as we could until we came to a swamp. We went into this morass as far as we could—through the mire and water to avoid pursuit of the hounds. We could hear the bay of the hounds and the blast of horns. We did feel bad to think that these poor simple fellows would run right into danger as they had done! It might have been about an hour before we heard the discharge of fire arms and all was still again and so ended. I have no doubt but that two more lives of fleeing prisoners were sacrificed. They had escaped from what was more than death—a Southern hell—as these prison pens were called, only to be shot to death.

Now we lay here in this quagmire marsh until night set in and then we started again, never intending to travel after night unless compelled to do so. The way that we intended to travel lay in a northwesterly direction, and oh, such suspense and fear as a man will have in traveling in the cold part of the year in the enemy's country, surrounded on every side by a gaping mob and howling hounds, and many a time while we were traveling near any road have we come upon a large company of rebels, almost on us before we would know it. We would lay down wherever we could, sometimes not over fifty feet away, and lay there until it seemed as though every eye was turned on us.

There are many incidents that happened that I never will be able to relate here in this tale of my escape. As I was saying, when night again set in it found us on our way to complete our travel. We had come a good, long journey without anything occurring of any note for several nights or days, until we got within sixty or seventy miles of the North



Carolina line. We had not had anything to eat for several days, except hard corn and once in a while some raw sweet potatoes that we had gathered along the way. We had at this time camped, or stopped, as I should say, in a secluded place in the forest, near a nice ravine, and in the forest quite a distance from any inhabitants. We had been traveling, as we had concluded to do, nights, and to sleep by day, and at this place we had got up just before night on Saturday. We thought we would move on a short distance, when we spied about fifty wild turkeys, and we tried hard to kill some of these, but we could not get near them, so we traveled on for some little distance, when we came to an old grist mill, some ways from any settlement. All around this mill there was corn growing, and it was loose and dry in the husk, so we gathered about a bushel of this corn and shelled it and tried our hands at milling. This mill we found was an old overshot wheel and it had but one run of stone. It seemed it had just been shut down, so we took the corn we had shelled and put it in the hopper. This did surely seem like a great undertaking, but we let it run, raising the gate and letting on a full force. Our small grist ran through the mill very fast, and just as soon as we could we scooped up the damp and smoking meal, and not any too soon either, for just about three-fourths of a mile away came two or three Johnnies on the run to see what had happened. We ran into the woods west of the mill, leaving it running full blast. We ought to have shut down the waste gate to the old mill, but we had no time to lose, as we thought, if we got away. We found some old sacks that we carried our meal in. Now we did not know what use we could make of this meal, but still we thought we might come across some darkey who would make some hoecake out of it.

Well, we traveled along in this timber for some little time, for fear that these rebels would pursue us, and just as night was closing in we came to where there was a woman chopping wood in these woods, and we lay concealed and watched her chop until she got ready to go home. Then we made ourselves known to her. She seemed to be very much frightened all the way home, and when she arrived at her house she told us that she had a husband in the army—I think in the Union army—at Knoxville, Tenn., and she told us how she was left with one boy and two girls. Her boy, just a few days before we arrived there, had been caught in the house, right on the hearth in the log cabin, where we now were, and had been shot down at his own mother's feet. He had been conscripted some months before and had been a wanderer in the forest, pursued by home guards, as they were called, but they were nothing but bands of guerillas, scattered all over the states, and this poor woman told Henry and I that her husband had been a good Union man before and since the war. It did seem strange that this poor woman should be compelled to cut this four-foot coal wood with which to make charcoal, and this was also used in making powder to shoot our Union boys.

Oh, yes, after she had related this sad story to us, she urged us to leave her house just as soon as we could, for she declared that there would soon be a band of rebel home guards along, and that they would kill us as soon as captured. We let her have the corn meal. I think that we had done the first milling in the southern country in the manufacture of corn meal. I have often heard the rumble of that old mill in my imagination since we left it running away. Oh, such speed, and such smoking from the fast heating stones!

Well, as I was saying, this woman told us that there was a poor old colored man down in a valley south of the house where she lived, about three-fourths of a mile away. We had not yet left her house, south of the road, when we heard the clatter of hoofs and of galloping steeds. At least two hundred of these home guards, or cut throats, as they were more commonly called, came rapidly up to this poor woman's house and halted for a few moments. We kept concealed to see what might turn up, and as soon as they went on we went down the valley until we came to the place that we had been directed to—the old colored man's hut. This was about eight o'clock in the evening and we saw to our amazement a little hut in the side of the west bank of this valley bluff. In front of this hut stood the poor old pilgrim, singing a beautiful hymn. We had found again one of God's true servants. He seemed to be about eighty years old. He had been in some way taught to read, and had a good idea of his Divine Creator. Well we had a good meeting with the old man, but all we found to eat, that the poor old man made us welcome to, was a small piece of mutton chops and about a pint of beans. After a long talk, he told us there was a good old Quaker whom he knew would befriend us if we would go with him. After he had declared the Quaker to be a truly good man we finally concluded to trust the old man, but we decided to keep our eyes on him while we went with him. He also told us that this man had a large sugar plantation, which he worked very late nights. Now our fare of chops and beans was becoming very slim, and we began to **get very hungry**. I tell you it is hard to relate what a hungry man wouldn't do before he would allow himself to starve to death. This I have had the sad experience of witnessing, and I pray to God it will never occur again. Well, this Quaker's place was about one and one-half miles from the

old darkey's place. We started at about 9:30 o'clock, and after we arrived at the plantation the house we found was a large brick structure. Just beyond we could hear the sound of mills grinding cane and the noise of the factory. We went just a little ways from the old planter's house and here Mr. Ledierer and myself waited, while the old darkey went on to get the old planter, or to see him in our behalf. Now, for fear the old man was working some scheme to betray us, I went on ahead of where Henry was to hear what the conversation might be. As soon as the planter had heard the old darkey's story, he discharged all of his hands and came to where we were. I was about ten yards in advance of Henry when they came along, and just as soon as I heard their talk I was convinced that we had fallen into the hands of a Godly man and a true christian pilgrim Quaker. Just as soon as he met us he took us by the hand, called on God to bless us, and whatever lay in store for us. Thank God, dear reader, for these apostles of Christ!

We went to the old planter's house and he had a boy stationed near the corners of the road to keep watch for anyone who might be coming, for the home guards would go by at most all hours of the day and night. Well, soon the kind old Quaker let us know that our midnight repast awaited us and he invited us to come and sit down to their table where his loving wife was seated. Here was a table spread with clean linen and napkins, and we poor, starved, walking skeletons without anything but rags to cover our feet from the snow and wet! Our drawers and shirts were made up of all of our attire, and oh, imagine our feelings, to be seated at such a repast that awaited us! And as we sat down to the table of our hostess and folded our arms as he returned thanks to his Supreme Maker the tears flowed from my eyes as I thought of home and my dear old mother. That

table and its clean spread put me in mind of her. My dear comrade, though as brave as any man I believe I have ever met sat by my side, and as we sat there thinking of the embarrassed situation we were in, we were like two weak children. The hostess sympathized with us in our distress. Well, we soon took hold of the repast, for we had not eaten but a very few meals to a table in over two and a half years. They were very anxious for us to tell what we had suffered in prison and seemed delighted to hear of our experiences. We would sit up evenings and tell of these incidents. We had stayed with this good old Quaker four days, and the fourth day we had it understood that we would start again on our journey. So when the time came for us to go it seemed like parting with the best of friends, leaving them never to meet again. I have often thought and truly believe that God will reward these good people for their many kindnesses to us. Now when all things were in readiness they furnished us with a large sack of stewed chicken and a mess of cakes, the best they could furnish, and with good advice we parted. The name of this man I have forgotten in this narrative. I wish to mention the excellent concealment that this good man had for us in his barn during our stay with him. He had a very nice barn which was on the south side of the road. It seems that the road runs east and west, and on the west side of the barn there was a large hay mow, and in the further end from the door he pulled out a large bundle of hay tied up in good shape which revealed a passage clear around the back of the mow and to the other end. There was a good bed that we slept on during our stay there, and through the day our food would be brought to us, and nearly every day, through a knot hole we could see guerillas going by, and sometimes stopping and looking around the place. Now I come back again to where we parted. The

kind old man had given us the direction where we could meet another man on our way who was friendly to Union soldiers. We tried to find his place on this shallow road which was about thirty-five or forty miles distant from this Quaker's plantation. He told us to be sure and remember that his name was John Coltraines. He also told us about this man's having a brother about a mile further along on the same road by the name of "Bill" Coltraines. One of these brothers was a Union man and the other a rebel. John, the kind old Quaker told us, was engaged in piloting Union men, as well as rebels, through our lines. The first night, not getting started as early as we ought, we only got about eight or ten miles on our way when we stopped and concealed ourselves. We had been living rather sumptuously and sleeping nights instead of laying still by day and traveling by night. We laid by this night. Henry and I lay concealed the best part of the next day, planning what we intended to do when we arrived home. We talked of either going to his parents' place or to my folks' home.

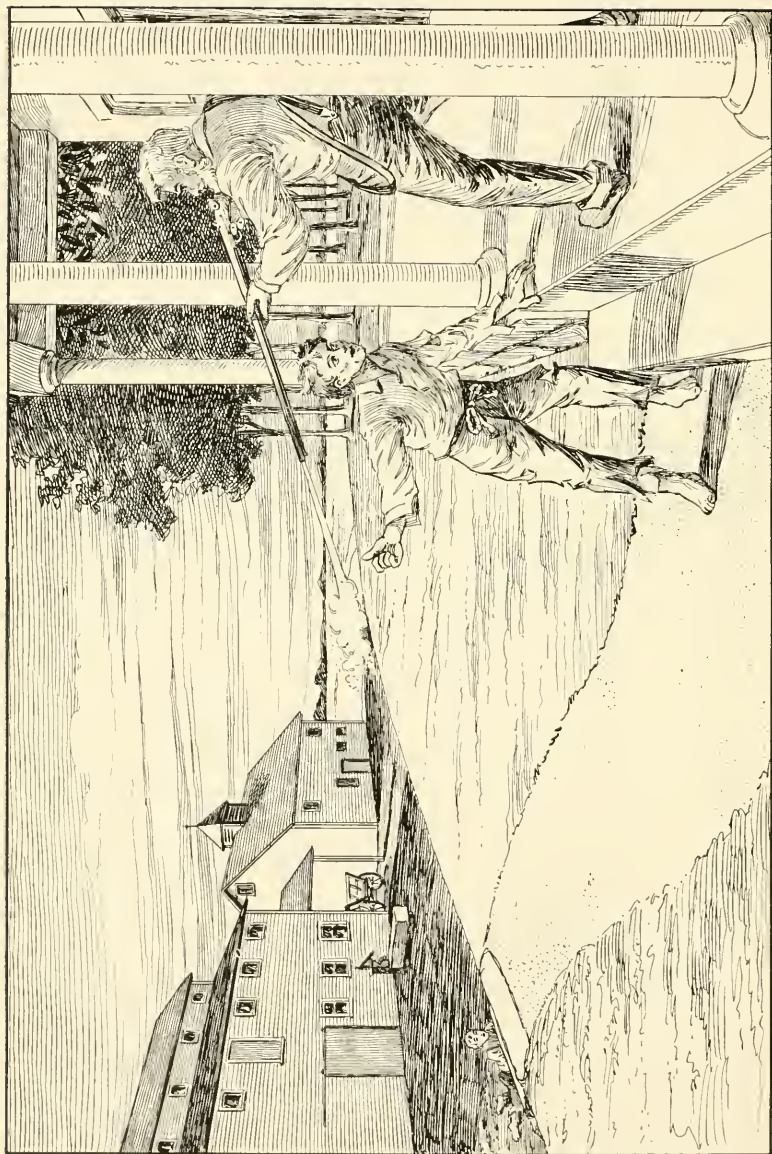
We would conceal ourselves until everybody had gone and then we would take possession and have everything to ourselves, and have everything to eat that we could think of. Being starved as we had been seemed to weaken our minds. Well, dear reader, if you could have seen the plight we were in and some of the nests of leaves that we gathered up for many a night to cuddle up in to snatch a few hours' rest and to inspect the tattered drawers and shirt that covered our starved skeletons, your sympathy would have been aroused. Soon the day dawned again and we lay concealed, sleeping and eating until toward night. Our stopping with the Quaker planter seemed to get us more in the notion of eating and of having some regular time in which to eat, but we could not let the sack of food alone which we allowed would

last us four or five days. It surprised us how soon it was gone, for before night of Saturday we had eaten about all we had started with.

We started again about eight o'clock to make more progress than we had the night before, hoping to find our friend, John Coltraines, of whom the good old Quaker had told us. We had to go very slow on the start, for this was a main thoroughfare and a state road, along which there was a good deal of travel. We were liable to run into rebels at most any time, but after about ten o'clock we had less danger of meeting with any travelers on the way. There were squads of rebels traveling along this road at all hours of the night, so we concluded to travel and make all the headway possible. We had traveled most of the night, which was far spent, and I had been stopping all along the way asking for something to eat, but had not been able to get anything. Once or twice I had been driven from the door with double-barreled shot guns.

We did not get clear through to our friend John's, but stopped after traveling about twenty-five miles or so. There were mile posts along this road, so that we could tell how far we were traveling in a day or night. After the second day had passed it found us again on the third night eating hard corn from the cob, as we had often done before, when it was not good for us to let ourselves be known along the way. We made up our minds to get to where John Coltraines lived this night if we could, for our old friend who had given us the direction of his abode, told us if we could only find him he would help us through to our lines without any trouble. We started with the full determination of getting through to our lines this night if the Lord was willing, and until midnight had past we had got out of the way and let squads of rebels pass and repass along the way and still

we had made some headway. After about the midnight hour I had stopped several times to make some inquiries as to where John Coltraines lived, without apparently any success. I had also asked for hoecake, and in return I had a double-barreled gun pointed through the door at me. This kind of fare we had been receiving all along the way. Never on our whole journey did fate seem to be so much against us as it did at this place, for we had not obtained a bite to eat for most three days, except the first. I had begun to get quite jealous of my dear friend Henry, for I had been stopping to enquire the way and he had not stopped, running the chances of being shot at, and I began to find fault, as every jealous person will, with my very best friend and comrade that I believe I ever met in this wide world. I do believe if I should meet him and he had but five dollars he would divide with me, and when Henry heard me talk to him about his being a little cowardly he felt very bad, and told me through his tears that he was no coward if I did think he was. This sad talk, and with such feeling, broke me up, and I caught my grieved old comrade by the hand and wanted him to forgive me for this unkind talk, which I promised would never again happen, and I wish to thank God that it never did. Henry was determined that he would show me that he was no coward and he told me that he meant to stop at the very next house. Now we had been told by our guide that we must not stop at William Coltraines', or "Bill," as he was commonly called, for he was captain of the rebel home guards, or of a band of guerillas. We had gotten very close to where John Coltraines lived, and it was best that we should go slow, as we had been told about the barn which was a very large one, on the west side of the road, and the big wood colored house on the other side located on a raised lawn. Several steps of square blocks led up to the



house. We came to this place, and Henry, not heeding my warning, at once started up these steps. I continued to call to him to stop, but he would not. He went to the large piazza and knocked on the door. I still called to him, but he did not heed, so determined was he that he would demonstrate to me that he was no coward. I could see very plainly that this was the very house we had been warned not to stop at, yet Henry continued to knock. There was a gruff voice heard, which I will never forget until my dying day, asking who was there. Henry told him that it was a friend. He was not satisfied, but still insisted on knowing who it was. Then Henry inquired where John, his own brother, lived. The old captain told him he would soon let him know where he lived, so he came to the door and shoved out a double-barreled shot gun, and before poor Henry had time to dodge, shoved my poor comrade and friend to the ground. I thought when he struck the ground that he had been killed, but soon he rose to his feet and pleaded for the rebel to spare his life. Just at this moment I rushed up to the top of the lawn, or stone steps, when he caught sight of me, and just as he was about to level his gun on me I dropped backward and struck on all fours at the bottom of the steps. Just as I did so Henry took advantage of the situation and hurried behind the house. He ran clear around and down through a cane field in the direction we had been going, and as soon as I could gain my feet I started down the road as fast as my legs could carry me. The rebel by this time was also at the road side and sent another shot after me. The first shot came very close. Just as I fell to the ground the rebel turned his fire on my comrade just as he turned the corner of the house. Now as soon as the second shot was fired at me he hastened to the barn, no doubt to get some steed with which to pursue us. Just then there seemed to be a great stir at that planta-

tion house. My desire was to again get with Henry, and stopping, I placed my fingers to my mouth and whistled the third brigade call. At the time of Henry's capture he was despatch carrier for our brigade and also the bugler of our regiment. Now I had learned to give the call on my fingers. This is the call in words: "Dan, Dan Butterfield! Butterfield, get up you poor devil as quick as you can, and when you get tired I will rest you again." This repeated in the first words on a horn or whistle is very interesting to anyone who has ever heard the call. Now to whistle this call right in the face of an enemy seemed a hard task, but it had to be done. Soon there came an answer, and within five minutes we were again on our way, but the thought of ever meeting with John Coltraines was now abandoned.

We had to change our course and leave this road, never to travel it again. We struck out to the west of this road, the road, as I have stated, running north and south. We made as good time as we could in order to reach a forest that seemed to lay off to the west. By this time it was now well on toward two o'clock in the morning. We succeeded in getting into a thick swampy region which we had every reason to believe saved our lives, for from the sounds we heard we came to the conclusion that we were being looked after in this swamp, and that it was no desirable place to be in. It was a very bad quagmire swamp, with moss hanging from the trees, and a bad place to stop in at night, let alone the day. For the next few days and nights, without a smell of meat or hoeecake, or any such thing, except hard corn, we had nothing more to eat, and our company day and night was moccasin snakes and other rattling and hissing reptiles. Still we traveled, not fearing the wild animals as much as we did the rebels with their horns and hounds. Well, I must say that, young as I was at that time, it was one of the worst

and most dreary times in the lines of life's pages. To even contemplate it now seems almost like a dream.

Well, after sleeping and traveling almost night and day continually—cloudy weather some of the time and lost some of the time—we finally came out where there was a large plantation on this Shelterford road some sixty miles from where I had been shot at and to which I had been directed by hearing the dancing of two small negroes and the patting and singing of a large negro in one of the negro huts. Here we stopped and ate the last meal together and the last night that we ever traveled together in this southern country. Oh, how sad it makes me feel when I think back of the lonely nights that we both spent, traveling the balance of our journey! Well, as I was speaking of our last meal together: It was at the supper of two rebel bushwhackers, and these two rebels who were staying at this rebel plantation were men who would shoot down a poor fleeing prisoner on sight, and this made us uneasy to get away. This darkey had placed in the fire, in an old-fashioned fire place, a mess of large sweet potatoes for us to carry along with us, as he told us, but this he did intending to keep us until the two rebel guerillas came in on us. We had told this negro how well the old Quaker had used us during our stay with him, and I think that this darkey took advantage of this to fool us in **telling us** that one of these men staying here was a Quaker and he did not know what the other was. He seemed to be so uneasy that it aroused us, and we had just arose to go when the gate opened in front of the hut and the two little black darkies slipped out unbeknown to us. They had taken with them a ham that Henry carried along with him. Just at this time we did not know what to do, for an instant, but I had learned that my dear comrade was no coward, for here he showed the bravest thing that I had witnessed in a long

time. I told the darkey that if he told of our whereabouts as we crawled under the bed, that we would kill him if it was the last thing we ever did. What my dear comrade did and which was his last brave act was to tell me to crawl under the bed and leave all to him. He thought he could get us out of the trouble all right. The two little darkies had already told the rebels of our eating up their supper, and one of these rebels, it seemed, went to the old planter's house for a double-barreled shot gun and the other rebel came into the negro cabin. Now this cabin was like all other plantation huts. It had one door and one window on the east side, in the former of which a rebel stood, and a fire place in the north end, made of stone and sticks and daubed with red clay, and in the corner at the foot of the bed was a ladder. Between this ladder, close to the straw cot, lay my comrade, and just as soon as the rebel commenced to ask the negro what was the matter, and the darkey standing in the middle of the hut with mouth wide open, Henry arose to his feet and spoke to the rebel, bidding him good evening. It took the rebel so much by surprise it seemed as though poor Henry could have snatched one of his weapons from his scabbard and shot him with one of his own guns, but it seemed that the Lord had another way for us to get out of this dilemma. Henry was trying to find his cane that he had left in the corner that he might surprise the rebel still more, but the little darkies had made way with it. So after the first surprise the rebel began to think of his weapons, and drew them for the first time, asking Henry where he was going. Henry told him he was going north to a large river that we expected to cross. "Well," said the rebel "how many are there of you?" Henry told him there were two of us. Oh, how uneasy I was at this time, under a bed in a negro hut, betrayed, and, as I thought, almost in the jaws of

death! Still he asked Henry where the other fellow was, and Henry told him I was out in the road. The rebel told Henry to go out and tell me to come in and he would fix him in about a minute. This was what Henry desired—to get out once for a start—so he went right off in a southern direction, and just as soon as the rebel started after him I got out of the hut as soon as I could. The darkey tried to stop me, but with one swing of my club I placed him out of my way. When I got to the road fence the rebels saw me running in the opposite direction. I made for the timber in a north-easterly direction as fast as I could, and very soon there was heard the blast of horns and the baying of hounds in pursuit of me. Oh, how gloomy and heart sick I was to find myself separated from my comrade, with hounds and rebels in pursuit of me. It must at this time have been about one o'clock in the morning. Soon thereafter it began to rain very hard. All at once the hounds came upon me, but they did not seem to be as fierce as the blood hounds of Andersonville. Shortly the blast of the horns ceased, and the hounds stopped following us. This was the last of our being together.

Now, my travel the balance of the way to our lines, of over four hundred miles, was alone, and a sad and lonely journey it proved to be. Well, I have learned from Henry what he did after he ran south. The poor boy came back to the negro shanty after it sat in and commenced to rain, to find out, if he could, whether the rebels had captured me, or had, as he thought, shot me, for as he made away they turned their attention to me, and he heard them shoot at me as I left the negro shanty. Henry came back to this shanty. The negro had drank an apple jack and was so drunk in consequence that Henry could not wake him, although he hammered him with his cane. He then went to the encampment of a large band of guerillas, and here he whistled on his

fingers the call of the brigade which we belonged to until he aroused the whole encampment. Well, dear reader, it is very seldom that one comrade will do this for another.

On the banks of the Big Peedee river, after we had swam this stream three times in one day, and each time I had carried poor Henry on a cane across my left shoulder, we pledged ourselves that we would not forsake each other in life or in death. Now I remained in this timber, thinking that Henry might come this way and we would again get together, but I was destined to disappointment, though I continued to make the call on my fingers, yet did not give up in despair. If I had I could not have written this simple narrative.

Well, I must hasten along. I lay by a good part of the next day in this forest. Then I kept on in a northern direction until I came to the river that Henry spoke to the rebel of. Now while crossing this river I had since learned that Henry and I might have gotten together again if we had only known each other, for below me, as I was told the story, there was a rebel, to all appearances, crossing the river about one hundred rods distant. We both told the same story, only he allowed the rebel was just such a distance above him, and right here, if we had understood, we could have gotten together again, but it seems our lives still laid apart from each other.

I am in hopes that we may meet some day—if not in this world, that we will in the world to come.

Praise God! My mind is continually trusting in Him that He will keep me in the truth in this narrative.

Now, as I continue the sad tale of my life, I would not like to rehearse the tale that Henry revealed to me of his escape in an endeavor to get through to our lines after he

left me. He had gone south a short distance and had come back to the plantation, not finding any clue as to my whereabouts. He had crossed the river, which I have already mentioned. He then concluded to go east, in the direction of Richmond, for he had learned that it was a great deal less distance to travel to get through to our lines in this way than to go west to Knoxville, Tenn. So he continued to travel for several days until he came to a plantation where there was no one at home. He said that he succeeded in getting into the plantation house, but he did not find anything to eat of any account. He found a ten dollar bill in an old pair of pants that he took possession of. He then continued to travel for some distance in the day-time, as well as night, and finally came to a small place where there was a log hut, and located in this hut was an old man, working at shoemaking. He went to the door of this hut and here he found, to his amazement, three rebels in full uniform, who invited him in, but he declined to go in, and remained at the door of the hut. There was some corn in a pile close to the door, and he got some of it and put it in the fire that was **close at hand**, and as soon as he stepped inside to help himself to the parched corn the enemy tried to get between him and the door, but he kept them back with a large club that he carried in his hands. These rebels, it seemed, had not brought any arms with them.

Well, soon Henry left this place and went right back in a piece of woods in the same direction from whence he had come, and just as soon as he could he went straight back to the same house and this old man's yard. He had a large rooster and some chickens running about. He killed the rooster and gave the old man the ten dollar Confederate bill and stayed right there, while the rebels took his back track.

Henry started as soon as the old man had stewed this fowl for him.

The only other incident that I remember was getting through the rebel picket lines on the James River, near Richmond, and his making a signal of distress to a gunboat and their coming ashore and getting him, while on the high banks there were lines of rebel pickets that he had succeeded in getting through. He was taken into our lines at City Point, and here he reported that he thought the rebels had killed me at the negro shanty. This story my comrade had told the captain of my company about and he had sent this word to my parents at home.

I will continue my story. As I have already told you, dear reader, my journey lay in a northwesterly direction from Florence prison, and at the negro shanty where we were separated it was very much nearer to our lines at Richmond than it was to Knoxville, Tenn., but while we were together we thought it was more difficult than to try to get to our lines at Knoxville, but after we were separated Henry made up his mind to try the nearest point. So I continued on my sad and lonely journey, not knowing what there was in store for me. If I had known what was going to befall me, it is possible this story would never have been written.

After I left the river and continued my journey I was now nearing the lines of West Virginia and the Blue Ridge mountains. I traveled a good many dark nights after I came in sight of the Blue Ridge before I came to them, and such nights—laying in swamps and the loneliest places that I could find—to avoid being discovered, and eating raw sweet potatoes and hard corn. It was very seldom I stopped to ask for anything to eat until I was starved into doing so.

Oh, how often since have I learned to put all my faith in God! I have frequently thought of the passage of scrip-

ture where the Saviour said the foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. How much I feel at this time that this was truly my condition.

Soon I felt as I neared the mountains, and at this time near the lines of West Virginia, that I must have something besides the stuff that I had been subsisting on or I would have to give up. I finally came to an old deserted house and at this time there was snow on the ground, some two or three inches deep. Then imagine a poor starved skeleton, weighing less than one hundred pounds, traveling the forests and swamps without anything but a pair of drawers and an old shirt; no hat or cap, no shoes, nothing but old rags tied around the feet, thinking of home and its warm fireside. Well, dear reader, this was my sad plight!

As I was saying, I had stopped at an old plantation to look around. Soon I saw a man about half a mile away toward the mountains, gathering corn from the field, with an old gray horse. I made myself known to him, for by this time I was getting very weak, not having had anything to eat since Henry and I had been separated at the negro shanty. If I remember right, there had been at least a week, if not better, since I had tasted food. When I got to the old man I gave him to understand that I was a fugitive and was on my way to Ash county, West Virginia. My way and manner of talking was not like that of the people here, so the old man told me he reckoned that I was a Yank from Salisbury prison, but he seemed to receive me so kindly that I told him who I was after he had told me that most of the people there were Union folks. This he did to win my confidence. Oh, how sorry I was as soon as I went to the house, for the old lady was, I believe, the hardest looking old woman, with a Roman nose, and such eyes I never saw, as

she glared on me when I uttered the word that we were rebels. Here there was a son about thirty years old, seated in a chair, who was a sad sight, for he appeared to be perfectly helpless and he would repeat just like some parrot the same words, "Yes, we are rebels here," and how simple he seemed to act. Now the old man told the old lady to give me some hoeecake if there was any and he at this time showed his true colors, for he told me that there was a company being raised and I had better wait and eat some hoeecake until he would return, and I would get a good suit of rebel gray, worth thirty or forty dollars a suit, and fifty dollars bounty. On saying this he left me, and jumping on the back of the old gray horse went off on the run to a small town four miles to the west and south of his place. This old man, I think, told me that he was eighty years old. As soon as he was gone I told the old lady if there was any hoeecake in the house that I must have it. She still insisted that they were rebels and had nothing for a Yankee. Then I told her that I would have to help myself, for I was determined to have something to eat or die in the attempt. I had almost become mad on account of going so long and having so little to subsist on. You see the harvest had gone by and the cold, bleak rains and some snow would fall every few days.

Now, kind reader, comes one more sad incident of my experience in life. I had finally started for the cupboard, when the old lady told me that she would give me some hoeecake, and that I must not try to go until "Pa" came home, and if I did she would have to stop me. I sat and ate the corn cake, which was done very soon, and then I started for the door. It seemed so strange that every time the old lady would say anything the poor crippled young man would repeat most everything his poor old mother would say. When I started to go to the door the old lady stepped between me

and the door and I told her if she did not step aside that I would have to use force enough to put her aside, for go I must. She had in her hand a fire poker and I felt afraid that I would have to war with a poor old woman. I told her that go I must, and she stepped aside, sending curses after me.

I must say right here that I had at last reached the Blue Ridge mountains, or at least this old man's place was less than half a mile from the foot of the mountains. Just before I could reach the foot of these mountains I had to cross a large, deep stream. I found that I could not get anything to cross on, though I looked diligently for a boat, and to cross a stream some one hundred rods or so across at such a time of year as it was then meant something. Believing it meant death or capture by the rebels, who would soon be on my trail, I nerved myself for this perilous undertaking. This was surely one of the coldest baths that I had ever before experienced. Now before me was one of the worst things that I had ever encountered in all my life, for if any of the readers of this story ever have been near the Blue Ridge mountains they know that unless a person finds a trail to cross the mountains with it is almost an impossibility to get over them. I knew nothing of any trail and knew from all appearances, and from what I could hear, that bloodhounds would soon be in pursuit of me, so I commenced to climb the side of the steep, rugged mountains, several hundred feet in height, which seemed to be almost perpendicular. After I had climbed for a long way up I could hear the hounds in pursuit of me way below, but I was sure that I had climbed where no human foot had ever been before. Well, I did not dare to look back.

This reminds me of the time when two certain people were commanded to flee and not to look back. My position reminded me of those two. You cannot imagine my feelings.

when I would get hold of some large bush that grew in the crevices of the rocks to have them give way and seem as though they would tear loose and let me fall some three or four hundred feet below. Now, to tell the whole truth, dear reader, it was over half a mile or more, and nearly perpendicular. The hounds could not climb after me, and once more I was satisfied that I had escaped another Southern hell, or I might say, death.

But what is death if the soul is in God's care? Well, praise God, it does seem that His hand was with me and is still with me in this last sketch of my life.

Still I continued to climb the mountain side until I got on top of one of the highest points before I dared to look down, and oh, what a sight you never have had, dear reader, being several thousand feet above the common level. Looking down you would be surprised at your enormous height. I must say that I believe I had climbed at least two thousand feet. At last I had gotten to where it was not so steep, yet it was still quite a distance from the top of the Blue Ridge mountains. After I had traveled some distance further I finally found it to be quite difficult to make much headway on a strange mountain, and that after night, and if, dear reader, you have ever been on any mountain you will find it more or less uneven and hard to climb, even in the daytime.

As I still continued to travel along, I soon came to a place which seemed impossible for me to get over. It was a very deep gorge or a cut, which seemed to be at least eighty or ninety feet from top to bottom, and over ten yards across. On either side it seemed to be perfectly straight up and down. Well, after some thought, I climbed down on what seemed to be a tall spruce tree, and after I got down in the bottom I found a stream of cold water which seemed to be running in the direction from which I had come. Here

I was right under the solid rocks and in a cave immediately underneath from where I had climbed down. I had a curious desire, though it was very dark in this cave, to go in and see how far it extended under the rocks. I thought how much I would have given at this time for a torch. Upon the impulse of the moment, I started into this cave and wandered for several rods. I continued for some distance. I had several times stepped from side to side of this cave and fell on the slippery and slimy stones in the bottom. There were many leaves that would rustle under my feet, and, oh, the many thoughts that would pass through my mind of some deep, unknown space that I might step off into, fall on the rocks and be killed. And if I should lie down to sleep and never awaken again! Such thoughts would crowd themselves upon my mind until I finally concluded to go back and climb another tree on the other side of the chasm. As I turned to go, to my surprise I heard, further back in the cave, a hoarse growl. This seemed to come closer, and if ever anyone needed help it seemed I needed it just now, for I could see two bright orbs or eyes looking right at me, and it seemed that every minute that what I had at this time encountered would soon bounce upon me. I continued to look right at the object until I had backed myself nearly to the mouth of the cave, and I soon got out on the opposite side by climbing another tall evergreen. After having crossed these mountains and gotten on the other side I met with a West Virginian. He told me that he had been for many years an old trapper, and had killed bears in this part of the mountains that weighed fully four hundred pounds. Now, it might be if I had stayed in that cave that this tale would never have been written.

I continued to travel until I came to a large farm on the top of this mountain, a farm of over one hundred acres, and

all cleared. It seemed so funny to find a large farm away on top of such a large and high mountain. I went up to the house and found it to be very large and black in color, which had a large, old-fashioned, fire-place, made of stone and sticks. There was but one door and one window, but it was a large house. The roof ran very low on the north side, and on the south side was the door and window. I went to this door and looked in the window and saw three or four pairs of cavalry boots, with spurs attached to them, sitting by the fire-place on the hearth. I made up my mind that it was best not to disturb these folks, for I did not like the looks of those boots and spurs. I went around the house and found on the north side a mess of shelves and on them quite a number of old-fashioned crocks all full of nice sweet milk. I drank a sup of it and then went on and looked for a mountain trail that I knew must lead down off this mountain somewhere. Soon I found it and followed it until I arrived in the village below. I went but a very short distance before I came to a log house, and found myself so hungry and faint that I had to call on the occupants of this house for a bite to eat. This night's travel had been well spent in getting over the mountains thus far. I went up to the door rather tremblingly and knocked for admittance, when a kind old man came to the door. I told him what I desired and he invited me into his house. This was about two o'clock in the morning. This proved to be one more hard spent night of travel. The whole family, composed of a very kind wife and a daughter, got up and in a very short time had a good breakfast. We all sat down and ate. It was about half past three o'clock. I told these people that I wished to go as soon as possible. I told them in as few words as possible how I had suffered and about the perilous times that I had experienced. He now told me that he had hunted in the

mountains that I had just crossed and told about killing bears that weighed over four hundred pounds. Now when we all had eaten, I started again on my journey, and I felt anxious to get away, for I had great encouragement that I would soon get to our lines. As we parted, after so short a stay, the kind old lady and her daughter shook hands with me and bade me God speed. The kind old gentleman went with me some distance from their place to direct me to the line of Tennessee. Now this kind old man told me to keep in line with the Blue Ridge mountains and to keep them to my left and follow the Chestnut Ridge, along in range with the Blue Ridge. He told me to be sure and not leave this Ridge, and it would bring me to what was called the Iron and Doe mountain. This mountain I would have to cross in order to get into our lines in Tennessee. So after a kind greeting and a wish for God's speed he parted with me.

I have often wished that I could have kept a diary of the names of the people who had befriended me on my journey. How many times have I thought of God's hand being in my travels.

I was instructed to be sure and keep in range of the mountains—that is, the Blue Ridge—and I would be sure to go all right. As I have said before, I had no intention of doing any traveling in the daytime. Thus far it had all been done nights, but after the old man left me and I had got on the Chestnut Ridge I found some of the largest chestnuts that I ever saw in my life. So I thought that I would pick up some of them and carry them along with me, and as I was doing so I heard a man down in the valley calling hogs, and it seemed as though he was looking in the direction I was in. He seemed to be armed with a gun, so I got on the other side of the ridge and hurried along for some distance, when I again stopped where the nuts seemed to be

very thick, when I looked up to find the object of my pursuit holding his gun on me and not over thirty rods away. This was the first time that I had been caught in so close a place.

I had now got some five or six hundred miles from Florence prison. As soon as I saw the rebel I thought I would run. Then I started to walk very fast, and it seemed that he would soon shoot me, judging from the way he acted. So I turned and spoke to him, and he told me that he reckoned he would have shot me if I had not stopped. We sat on an old log and talked for a long time, and I must say that this was the first time in my life that I ever talked politics, but it seemed as though I never had such power o' speech before, for I told this rebel plainly that the South had seceded and rebelled from the best government on earth, and if Jeff Davis was hung that the war would close. The rebel would say the same about our martyred Lincoln, and at last this rebel home guard, or guerilla, told me that I would have to go with him. This seemed hard after having suffered what I had to get away from those rebel hell pens to be taken back. It discouraged me so much that I concluded to die rather than go where he would turn me over to any home guards, for I knew it meant almost certain death to any Yankee to be retaken after trying to get away from prison. Oh, how I plead for him to let me go, and told him no one would ever know except God if he did. I plead as I never plead before in all my life, and shed fountains of tears, but still it seemed all in vain. The rebel told me that he would have to take me to a home guard about four miles distant, and he ordered me to get up and go with him. Now when I saw that my entreaties would not prevail, I concluded that I would get away from him some way or die in the attempt. So I pretended to be very lame and could

hardly go, and as we traveled along told him that I would still live in hopes of getting through to our lines and to friends. He allowed me to walk a little in his rear, and still sobbing and pleading for him to let me go. I had my mind made up to get his gun out of his left hand as he seemed to be trailing it along and to brain him and get away and leave his carcass on the Chestnut Ridge to feed the fowls, or to be found by some other home guards. Now, as I was contemplating this and still pleading for him to let me go, having already attempted to reach his gun, I spoke of my poor old mother, who was waiting at her sad fireside, after losing one of her boys in the Battle of the Wilderness, and whose bones were lying in the Alexandria cemetery, and who died before he was sixteen years old. When I spoke of this and my poor suffering mother at home it seemed to break him up and he turned around just as I was about to make the final attempt to snatch his gun. He looked very pale, and, sobbing, told me that he had a good mother once who used to pray for her wayward boy, but she was gone now. He said: "If you will promise not to tell who you are or where you came from we will go down to that house in the valley and get something to eat and you can go," and then it was that my heart was lifted, for I could see that he meant what he said. Still I continued to be very careful not to trust him too far. Well, we went to the house and found two nice looking women there, one weaving the sheep's gray cloth, and they asked me very kindly where I came from. I told them that I was only a refugee. That was all my guide allowed me to tell. Now the food that was set on the table for me to eat was something immense. The good hostess sat on the table one full old-fashioned gallon crock of milk and a nice dish of butter, a bowl of nice apple sauce, a plate of biscuits and a loaf of corn bread. Oh, how, I thought of my own home as

I sat eating. It seemed that I never would get through. They all sat and gazed at me while I ate, and after eating nearly all that there was on the table—at least nearly a whole gallon of milk, and most all that I have mentioned—the rebel came to me and placed his hand on my shoulder and told me that he reckoned I had better stop eating if I did not want to kill myself. The two ladies of the house looked sadly after me when I started off, and as soon as we got out of the house the rebel told me to keep straight east and that I need not be afraid to stop anywhere. I concluded that he wanted some one else to take me, but did not go a mile before turning to the northwest, the same direction I had traveled all the way when the stars were my only guide.

Henry and I had found on an old southern map where Knoxville, Tenn., lay from Florence prison. I had not gone over half a mile when I began to get sick, and I vomited all that I had eaten. It seemed as though it would kill me, eating so much milk and apple sauce. It caused gas in my poor, weak stomach.

It came on foul, cold and rainy weather and traveling without the guide of the stars was very difficult. I traveled for several nights and parts of days, to find myself back to the very house that I had left, and to my joy found them good Union folks. The women received me kindly and concealed me in the loft of the small barn. The next night found me again on my way.

It seemed as though I had traveled in the last preceding days, and had made no headway, over seventy-five miles. I got started again before night and came to where there was a large chestnut orchard, of over ten acres, and the limbs of the trees grew close to the ground. In this orchard there was a large drove of hogs fattening on the nuts that they got to eat, and right to the left of this was a large field of over

one hundred acres of pasture and a vast herd of cattle was feeding in this field. Down to the north of the field I spoke of, in which the hogs were, was a large brick house and just south of the house stood several graycoats looking at me. The cattle were following me while I crossed this large field and their bellowing made me very nervous.

Well, after I had traveled again for nearly three nights and days, in cloudy weather, I found myself crossing this same field, in the same place, going in the same direction. Now this kind of traveling nearly broke my heart. I saw the hogs, to make sure, and the chestnut orchard and the brick house. Oh, how I cried to see what a waste of time I had made. I came to the conclusion that I would not travel any more unless I had settled weather. This event caused me to shed bitter tears once more, and to recall this to my memory makes me feel extremely sad, but I do thank God from the depth of my heart that I have learned to trust Him under every circumstance, and when I look back over these scenes and memories of the past I feel to praise God for preserving my unprofitable life.

Well, I crossed this field again, determined to lay by until clear weather, and when night sat in the stars and moon shone, which helped me along until in a few days I came to the Iron and Doe mountain. I had traveled for several days with nothing to eat but hard corn, and as another day began to dawn I came to a barn back in the field from the house that seemed to be near Iron mountain. I stayed here, intending to go again in the evening. I saw a boy about ten years old come near the barn to get an old gray horse. Then I saw a middle aged lady go with a cart to milk. Oh, how the pangs of hunger again bothered me. Well late in the afternoon, about four or five o'clock, I saw no one but the little boy and a girl about fifteen years old. They seemed

to be afraid of me, and well they might be, for I had long, uncut hair of nearly half a year's growth, and was a sad looking sight. These good children gave me a dish of bread and milk to stay my poor, weak stomach until their mother came home, and very soon I learned that this woman's husband was in the Union army at Knoxville, Tennessee. I stayed here concealed in the corn husks for these days, and it was quite bad weather, but how many hours I sat in the house and told them of the suffering of prisoners in southern prisons.

Now the time had come for me to again be on my journey. When I got ready to go it seemed hard to part with such kind friends who had done so much for me, and something that I felt I would never be able to repay in this world, but I bid them a kind farewell. This good lady told me to follow along the mountains until I came to the mountain trail and then I was to follow this across the mountain. She told me I would come to the trail in about four miles from her place. Then after I had crossed the Iron and Doe mountain it would take me into, I think, Johnson county, Tennessee. Well after leaving this place I thought that I had crossed one mountain on my own hook and could do so again. So after going about two miles came to the conclusion that I could turn to the right and climb up the mountain until I struck trail, and did so. I climbed one range after another, as I thought, when it began to get cloudy, and I well remember that the woman told me it was fourteen miles across this mountain. Now when the fowls were crowing for daybreak what was my surprise to find myself back to the very house that I had just left, and had to go clear up to the door before I could be convinced that it was the place I had left that evening. I did not want them to know that I did not follow their directions. So I just

started off as fast as my poor weary legs could carry me, and before day had the satisfaction of knowing that I had struck the mountain trail. I will say right here that my kind friend told me to be sure to pass the third house before attempting to stop, and then I would find good Union people. As soon as I got to this mountain trail it commenced to snow and blow very hard, and oh, how I suffered. I am not able to describe here what I experienced and my tongue seems too short to tell it, but, dear reader, just imagine yourself in my stead, surrounded by rebels on every side, and in a strange country, and clad with an old woolen shirt nearly in tatters and your drawers with one leg gone to the knee, and you can form some idea of what I had to put up with in this cold storm, and a mere walking skeleton at that. I had an average weekly fare of corn hoeecake and bacon, and that not averaging once a week.

Well, I had been told when I got by the third house that it would be safe to stop. The storm was so severe that I made a mistake and stopped at the third house, and as fate would have it this was the very one that I should have shunned. Here I found a rebel captain from the Eleventh Virginia Cavalry, home on a furlough, and when I knocked and he let me in it must have been three or four o'clock in the morning. I told him I had been directed there by a friend and he seemed to be all right, and placed a feather bed on the hearth of an old-fashioned fireplace, or close to it, and it was not many minutes before I was fast asleep, and really I imagined that I was at home on one of my own mother's cots, but what was my surprise when I awakened to find myself in the hands of a rebel captain, in full rebel uniform, with bars on his collar. Truly I felt surprised. His wife told me as soon as I arose that I ought to have gone to the next house and there would have found her own folks, who were

good Union people. Her husband, the old captain, tried to stop her talk, but it seemed of no avail. She told him if he did not let me go that she would go home. He told me to sit and eat some hoeecake and bacon, for he was going to turn me over to the home guards. I felt so bad to think that I was again in the hands of my enemy. I told him that I could not eat, but he commanded very fiercely for me to come, and the look of his wife told me that he needed petting. So I went and ate my supper—not my supper, but dinner, I might choose to call it—but could not eat much, and drank a little corn coffee, and how many tears and such pleading, both on my part and the part of his kind wife, to let me go! At last when pleading ceased and his wife told him that if he did not let me go that she would go home and there remain, with many bitter curses on his lips he started off, with me tagging along after him, down again toward the foot of the mountain. I looked over his side arms and it occurred to me that he had no gun of any kind, nothing but a sword to guard me. So I lagged behind, pretending that I could hardly walk, and I took a good look at his long legs, for he was over six feet tall, and then I started up the side of the mountain with the rebel in full pursuit. I still continued to run the best I could up among the rocks and brush that grew thick on this mountain side. Still the rebel continued to pursue me for some time, when finally he went back.

Well I kept on for some length of time, until it had gotten to be nearly night. I finally came to the mountain trail that I had been on when I stopped at the rebel captain's place. I had in all of this day's rambles traveled in no direct line, but had put in a good part of the day.

I had not gone far before I came to a log cabin, and here found two women. It had snowed two or three inches the

night before, and during the day the sun had come out warm, and in the woods a man could be tracked. It seems that the rebel captain had gone back and got help to pursue my trail, and when I stopped at the log cabin and asked for something to eat they gave me a lunch and told me that the captain's place was not more than six or seven miles from where I was, and they told me that I had better go to a barn which was back in the lot just a short distance from the house and conceal myself in a large quantity of straw that was in the barn. This barn was built of logs. So I went and crawled down in the northeast corner, clear down to the bottom. Now I had heard of crawling into a hole and drawing the hole in after you, so I tried to fill the hole up after me the best I could, and none too soon either, before there came three mounted men, one the captain. They tried to make these two women tell where I had gone. These women had husbands in our army at Knoxville, Tennessee, and I think these Union women would have died before they would have revealed my whereabouts. Soon these men came to the barn, looked all through it, and it seemed as though they would dig in the corner where I was and find me, but they went away without finding me, and again tried to find out for certain from these women whether they had seen me, for they had tracked me through the timber to the clearing, but when they came to the clearing the snow was gone. These rebels soon went back in the direction that I had come, and I went to the house and again started on my way, it now being dark, to see if I could not succeed in getting across this mountain. It did seem as though this was the hardest part of my journey, for after traveling all night until nearly morning, I lost a good share of the time from the mountain trail. What was my surprise to find myself again in the hands of a rebel guerilla. I had come around in front of a newly con-

structed log building, and just as I did so I saw a man in full rebel uniform seated on an old box mending a pair of boots. He perceived what a plight I was in for dress, and as he heard me talk he began to ask me a good many questions in regard to where I was from, and he told me about his being in the rebel army and deserting, and about his parents being good Union people. After he had talked for some time I really thought he was a good Union man, and told him of my escape from prison. Then I told him where I was from, and that my birth place was in Erie county, Pennsylvania. After we had talked some little time he wanted to know if I ever worked at shoemaking. I told him that I had, and that my father worked at the trade as long as I could remember. So he had me mend up his boots, which I did, thinking that his wife would soon be home and get something to eat. Now this was one of the worst sights for poverty that I had seen in all my travels, for it did not seem as though this man had five pounds of corn meal in this newly built hut. In one end there was a very rudely constructed fireplace, and I failed to find anything inside of the place to answer for a bed, except some old rags and a little straw in one corner. The day was nearly half gone when I had finished mending his boots, and he seemed to be very well pleased, when I told him that it did not seem as though his wife would be back very soon, of whom he had spoken. He had told me that as soon as she came she would get something for us to eat, but I still insisted on going. So I started to go, and just as soon as I made away he reached behind the door and got out a double-barreled shot gun and brought it to bear on me. He told me to stop or he would have to shoot. I thought how soon my friend had turned to a foe. I found that I was again in the hands of an enemy. As soon as I went back to him he called very loudly for his mother to

come up to his place. It seemed that his folks lived about a hundred yards or more away, just across the woods. Soon his poor old mother came running up to the house and asked him what was the matter. He wanted her to stay with the children while he went away with me. Then she looked at me and wanted to know where he was going. He told her that I was a Yankee, right from Pennsylvania and that he was obliged to take me and turn me over to the home guards. He would shoot or hang me without any trial whatever. Then she told him that he had deserted from the Confederate army himself and would be just as liable to arrest as I was, but he didn't seem to care how much she talked to him. Oh, so selfish was he to accomplish his end! He wanted his mother to stay with the two children while he went away with me. Then his mother wanted to know who I was and I told her all I had done for her son, and how I had waited after mending his boots, and how he was inclined to want to shoot me for the kind act I had shown him. "Well, mother," he said, "will you stay here with the children until I come back?" "No sir, I will not do it, nor will I ever do anything for you if you do not let this poor starving creature go," she said. "No, mother, I could not do it, but if you will take the children home with you I will go down and let father see my prisoner, so come along," and he made me walk right in front of his double-barreled shot gun, and was very careful to tell me if I undertook to run that he would have to shoot me. In this way we went to a corn field, about a half mile from his father's place, and here we found about eight or ten women and men husking corn. Advancing up to his father this "William," as they called him, said: "Father, here is a real Yankee, right from Pennsylvania." "What part of Pennsylvania are you from?" asked the father. I told him from Erie county. "Well," he said, "my boy here was born

in that state, in Crawford county. Well, how do you do? I am very glad to see you. William, what have you got that gun for?" "Why, father, don't you know that I took a hard oath to serve my country?" "Yes, you took an oath, my poor boy, but deserted the Southern service, knowing that your poor father was a Northern Union man. Yes, yes, you took a wonderful oath, but, William, you must let this man go." All the talk the poor old man could say to his son was of no avail, and now his kind brother plead with him. This boy was only seventeen years old. He had lost his right arm above the elbow. Then came, last of all, his sisters, and if ever I have heard pleading for one's life it seemed that these poor souls did it. It seemed that all this man's aim was to try his firearms on me, for after a long talk with his young brother and sisters, the brother came to me and told me that the only way that William would release me was for me to start off a little distance and then run. He said William would probably shoot at me and that he was afraid it would mean death to me very soon. The brother and his two sisters came back shortly, and the former told me what he had concluded to do. He allowed that he would just get off a short distance and then I must get up and run. Then William would turn and shoot at me, and I must run all the faster. He started and walked off about ten rods and I saw that he did not intend to go any further. So I arose as quickly as possible from a shock of corn I had been husking and started for a very steep bluff which was almost straight down, and it did seem as though I fairly flew down this hill so rapid was my flight. Dear reader, if you was never compelled to flee from a foe with a gun and then to be shot at, you can imagine the plight I was in. Now I want to say right here that in eternity I expect to meet this same man, and I don't want him to come up before me and say: "You

wrote a tale, away back there, against me that you scattered broadcast which was untrue."

Now if I never complete this tale of my sad life, or if I do, I just ask God to direct my pen that I might not purposely insert one word that is not true, to the best of my knowledge. I do praise God from the depth of my heart that my faith is in Him.

As I was saying, I ran down this steep bluff, and just before I reached the foot of it there came the discharge of my pursuer's gun, and a rain of buckshot flew all around me. I was very thankful that they did not hit me. William, as they called him, told me that he just fired at me so as to clear himself from the hands of the rebels. It did seem as though he should have given me some food before putting me up for a target. His deceiving me while fixing his foot-wear seems to convince me all the more that he meant to do me harm. After firing the shot gun at me he buried his brother's side arms, which consisted of a large horse pistol, which he carried with him. After firing two shots from the shotgun, he still continued to follow me for at least a mile and a half, until I hid in a thick foliage of laurel brush. He came within twenty yards of my concealment, calling for me to show up and it would be all right. I could not believe him, for I had lost all confidence in him.

Now that night about nine o'clock I had to pass this same man's house. I found him singing and rocking his little "Jeff"—his boy whom he told me he had named after Jefferson Davis. Oh, how the pangs of hunger commenced to tell on me at this time!

Right here I would like to say that during the conversation I had with the younger brother, who had lost one of his arms, he told me how he had been taken prisoner near Big Round Top at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and of being

in the care of men belonging to the Fifth Corps, and how well he had been cared for. He told me that his arm was amputated at this place.

As I was saying, the traitor was singing and rocking his little "Jeff" as I passed by his place. I remember that he told me about his brother living about a mile ahead on the mountain trail. So when I came there I thought I would stop and let myself be known, but I did not do so. I went to a cool spring house near by and found there some nice milk and a piece of corn bread which I was very thankful to take possession of.

After this I started along, and instead of keeping the mountain trail I took a cow trail that led far up on the mountain. It seemed that I never, in all of my journey, traveled harder to reach our lines or to get into the state of Tennessee than I did this night.

After traveling all night, until it broke day, I found myself on one of the highest pinnacles of this mountain, and, as I supposed, was looking down into Tennessee, for at a distance I could see a log house, so in this direction I made my course. After some traveling I came to the house, and what was my surprise to find myself back to the very house that I had stopped at and drank the milk. This place proved to belong to the father-in-law of the man who had done the shooting at me the day before. So I thought I could do no better than to stop, for at this time I had become very hungry. So I went in, and as I was seated at the table talking and telling of what had happened to me the day before, we heard the discharge of a gun several times, and these good people told me that the man who had betrayed me told them that he had wounded me, and intended to capture me the next day, and had started very early that morning to complete his work. While still eating, we could hear the

discharge of his gun every little while. It made these people laugh to know that I was sitting at their table while my pursuer was on those high bluffs, pretending to be hunting to death that runaway Yankee.

Now, after I had finished eating I started once more to follow the mountain trail, as far as I dared to, and then laid by until night set in, for I had not traveled very much by day.

After bidding these kind friends good bye I started, hoping to get across these mountains without any very serious trouble. I had got where the mountain began to descend, when I began to have hopes that I would soon arrive where I could be safe in our lines.

Oh, how I longed to be at my own father's fireside! These thoughts would, in my state of mind, cheer me up. After laying by until night set in I again started down this mountain side. The distance, I think I had been told, down this rugged Iron and Doe mountain was about eight miles. About one or two o'clock I found myself at the foot of the mountain and about a mile from it. I came to quite a respectable looking farm house and barn. Here I stopped and was told that I was now within the lines of Tennessee. This caused me to believe that my troubles were nearly at an end. But, alas! they were not.

I will soon tell you, dear reader, what occurred to me when I went to this house. They received me very kindly and after eating something they had me go to the barn and there remain until about noon. When the man wanted to know if I did not want to go to a corn husking bee, I told him that I did not dare to. He insisted on it so hard and my thinking that getting into Tennessee meant I was practically into our lines, or at least into a Union state, I made myself quite free, after some persuasion, to go with him. As soon

as we arrived at the place, about two miles away, we found a great company of people there. They seemed to come and consult with my friend a good deal, and when supper was announced I told my friend that I must leave, for there were at least two rebels there who were home from the Southern army, and who seemed to be very inquisitive as to where I had come from. So I started back to my friend's place and he stayed to see what he could learn in regard to what they intended to do. He came home about seven o'clock and came to the barn and called to me, but I was concealed in the straw in the barn loft and did not answer, for the reason that he told me not to reply to any one until I was sure that it was him. As soon as I knew it was him I came down and he told me that he had overheard the two rebels talking together and that they were coming to his place to capture me. He had a small lunch for me and I found to my sorrow that my troubles were not ended.

From this place I traveled all that night and so on until some days had passed, when I came at last to a northern range of the mountains. Now in Tennessee there are a great many ranges of mountains, one range after another. Well, I stopped at this man's place and found a very warm friend and a good whole-souled Union man.

If I have not forgotten, it was about three days from the time I left the barn, of which I have spoken. The man's name was John Robertson, and it appeared that he had a niece whom he told me he desired to send home across the mountains, over into what is called Carter county, Tennessee. Beyond Carter lay Knoxville, which I had been nearly forty days trying to reach. In the morning, in my sad condition of dress, I started across this mountain, with the young lady to guide me. On the way we sang national songs, and for about nine miles we spent the time very

pleasantly. Long before night we came to the settlement on the other side of the mountain. This place is now called Carter county, Tennessee. Here at the first place we came to were Anderson's two or three men in blue clothes. This young lady had not explained that there were eighteen of our soldiers cut off from our army at Knoxville, and when I saw them standing in front of the house I was about to flee to the mountains again, but the young lady just insisted that they were Union soldiers. So I went up to the house and was very kindly received, and here I must say I had one of the greatest experiences that I ever had in all my life. The next day after my arrival the Anderson people thought they would clean me up somewhat. So they had me take off my old drawers and shirt and placed on me some old twilled pants and a shirt, and I was set to work building a fire to clean and scald the old clothes that I had taken off. I say clothes—nothing but a part of a pair of drawers and a shirt that had seen more than six months' service. Then talk of pleasure in a soldier's life!

When I had just fairly got the water and the fire agoing there came up the main road, just a few rods away, the sound of many horsemen and the clatter of hoofs and a motion from the house for me to flee in the direction of the mountains. I started, not knowing whether to ever come back or not. I ran about a mile along the foot of the mountains, when I came to a man by the name of Sampson Robertson. I found that he was one of our men, but had been conscripted into the rebel service. He never went into the Southern army, but skulked for a living among his friends. He told me for the first time that this dash of rebels numbered over one hundred men, and that they had come over the mountain from the west, from Sullivan county, to capture our eighteen Union scouts, and that they intended to

intercept them, for these rebels had already robbed the poor people of everything, even their bedding and household goods, and had killed an old man some sixty-two years old and burned the grist mill. If ever I wanted to help a handful of our poor soldiers, cut off from our army, it was now. So I went along to where I fell in with about seventeen of our men and boys, all told, and nine of the very best of these men allowed me to go along with them upon a bluff overlooking a run called Stony Creek, traveling down through the valley. This run was very deep and at least sixty yards across, and there was a small foot bridge, made of hewn timber, on small abutments. Just opposite this foot bridge there was a very large bluff or mountain, some three hundred feet high, and on this high elevated ridge these nine scouts had located themselves. I had the honor of being one to help in the little battle that was soon to come off. I had one of the old hero's muskets. Now we could see the Johnnies coming. They had divided their force of one hundred men and were advancing right up to this foot bridge and began to cross it, when our boys opened fire on them from five shooting carbines. They told me to load the old musket well with buckshot and let them have it. Well, to tell the truth, I took too much powder from an old powder horn, for I put in nearly a handful, and also about a handful of buckshot. When this gun did go it would kick right smart, I reckoned, but still kept on loading and firing it, to the merriment of the other boys. But, oh, such fun! In a short time the rebels turned back and went away faster than they came. The Union boys, some of them, went on the mountain trail as the rebels were on their way back, and while they were leading or riding their horse the Union boys opened fire on them and nearly stampeded the whole force. There were only six or seven of our boys. We succeeded in escaping while they

were trying to capture us. We had it from their own men that there were seven, I think, wounded and two killed. If I am not mistaken, this is what the rebels reported. They could not reach us from where they were.

Now after this great share in the battle I went back to the place that I had left, and stayed with a woman by the name of Urie Low. At this place I stayed for some four or five days. I made while here, I think, three pairs of shoes out of almost raw hide, working the hide just long enough to get the hair off and left them tan color.

So ends my first introduction into Carter county, Tennessee.

After this I stayed at Mrs. Low's place for some time. Then I went to Lieutenant Housley's, one of our men, and a commander among the Union boys. I went to Housley's place to stay, and would go to a mountain cave to sleep nights, for it was very dangerous to stay at the dwellings any more.

There was one thing that happened soon after I went over to Lieutenant Housley's place. I was requested to stay at a place called Sampson Robertson's. All the boys had gone to the cave and I stayed at the house a short time to finish a pair of shoes for one of Mr. Robertson's daughters. I had just got seated near the fireplace and was telling some of the exciting times I had in making my escape. Time passed along very pleasantly, when there came a stern command from the door for the women to clear away from the hearth of the fireplace so they could end that Yankee talk. If ever I felt afraid in all my life I did just now, and if I ever needed help it was now. The good woman had me sit clear down on the hearth, and if ever I felt myself under petticoat government or protection it was now. Here I sat while the daughter of Mr. Robertson entertained these two rebels and

gave them apple-jack, or what was sometimes called apple brandy. The women got a large amount of walnuts and butternuts for them to crack, and for over two long hours I sat on the hearth and took the cursing of those two rebels. I can tell you if I ever had to be placed in the same position again I would say let me stand before the belching cannon and the rattle of small arms rather than to be cooped up in a log hut on the stone hearth surrounded by the breastworks of brave women!

How often have I thought of this place in my life and what a delicate position it was. Well, it seemed as though the time had passed the slowest it ever did in all my life. While these two rebels began to be fired up with drink they began to make threats about what they would soon do to the Yankee, and I began to whisper to the women to let me slip out and make one dash by those two blood thirsty rebels. There was but one door and they told me to sit very quiet. Soon the wife of Lieutenant Housley's father-in-law slipped by those two rebels and went over a mile and a half to the cave where the Union boys were staying, and very soon there came dashing down from the mountain cave the brave Lieutenant Housley and the husband of this brave and heroic woman. She had to climb over one hundred and fifty feet, where the edges of rocks were not more than three feet in width, and on a very dark night at that.

Once more I had great reason to thank God and these kind ladies for saving me from blood thirsty villains.

In about an hour there was a stern command for those rebels to surrender, and they arose to their feet and ran, but soon the lieutenant stopped them with a shot or two, wounding one of them in the arm. The two Union men made the two rebels take the oath of allegiance to our government and then they were allowed to go.



Now, just as soon as I found that our boys had arrived it made me glad to know that I was able to get out of such a cramped position. Before this I never had witnessed such a close place, let alone being in it. I can say that I was very thankful for my deliverance from these drunken rebels.

After they were disposed of the lieutenant told me that I had better go to the cave with them, and after this I was careful when night came on to find my way to where I was more safe than at the houses in this neighborhood.

I would like to tell you about the cave we had to stay in. I must say it was a most wonderful sight. The trail commenced at the foot of the bluff, or mountain, and wound its way up the side for nearly three-fourths of a mile and followed along the west side of a large range of mountains. Very close, or right under this trail, there was a large cataract, and for over one hundred and fifty feet above this cataract was the mouth of the cave, concealed by a large amount of foliage, such as laurel and sage bush. It would be almost impossible for a stranger to find this cave. After passing into this cave it was very beautiful, for far up through the crevices of the rocks came the light of the sun. This cave was over one hundred feet in length, and it seemed to be of different widths, varying from thirty to forty feet. On either side were rude couches where our poor boys caught their short naps, and in the middle, on the rock bottom, there was a warm fire, which was perfectly concealed from observation below, and the smoke went a long ways up among the mountain's high cliffs. This reminds me of hiding in the cliffs of the rocks.

Oh, I am so thankful that I have learned to hide in the Cliffs of the Rock of our salvation through Jesus Christ!

Weil, now, since I have explained the cave, I must tell you that my stay in Carter county must have an end. So the

report came that the rebel army had left Sullivan Station. This was on the railroad. They had retreated way beyond the lead mines and salt works. The time had come for us—myself and all of these Union boys—to leave for Knoxville, so we all started in the direction of the mountain trail. The night before we started the people all met at the house of one of the Union boys, and it was as sad a parting as I ever want to witness in my misspent life. I saw here mothers, fathers and sisters parting with each other, probably never to meet again. Oh, such a sad sight! Finally my time came to bid farewell to friends. It seemed in so short a time, only about three weeks, I had gained such an attachment with these people that it seemed as though I was parting with near and dear friends of longer acquaintance. When I came to Lieutenant Housley's family it seemed I had to pass them by, for I had been at their table and had been treated very well by them. This is an incident that I will speak of later. Now when I came to bid Angeline, the daughter of Lieutenant Housley, good bye I could not do so without showing more than common feeling, for without thought I had learned to have a great deal of affection for this girl. When we left all these good people we did not think we would ever return—at least I never thought that I would see any of them again in this world of sin.

We started for the mountain and as soon as we got to it it was said the lieutenant wanted two men to volunteer to go across the mountain, about nine miles, and find out for sure if the rebel army had gone from Sullivan Station. I stepped forward with a young fellow by the name of Rogen Anderson. The lieutenant told us where we would find one of our spies over the mountain near Sullivan Station. We started armed with a brace of good revolvers and a fine shooting revolving carbine. It was in the afternoon, and we were to be

back by night if nothing prevented us. We started on our way and that night we arrived at a Union spy's place. We intended to go back just as soon as we found out that the rebel army was gone, but the old man told us where there was a blue overcoat which he claimed was about two miles from where he was staying. So my friend Rogen and I thought we would go and see the man where the coat was. He was a Presbyterian minister. There was also a breech-loading rifle here. We intended to get it if we could. The old pilot went as far as a small piece of woods and Rogen and I started in the direction of a large house that was about three-quarters of a mile away. When we got within about forty rods of the house, what was our surprise to see seven armed rebels come out of the east side and form a line, and on the back of the spokesman was the blue coat I have spoken of. This leader called to us to surrender. I did the talking, and told him that we would never do so, but if they did not throw down their arms we would advance and shoot as many as we could. We both acted upon my suggestion, for we started, with drawn weapons. Just as soon as these seven rebels saw our bravado they started and ran around the house and opened an outside cellarway and down into this they went. When we came up to the front we were very careful not to go around to that cellarway, but instead came up in front at the piazza. I had told these rebels that our Colonel Kirk, of the Seventh Tennessee, was awaiting our success, and we demanded the gun. The old man produced, and as soon as we got it we started back and struck the piece of woods where the colonel was. We started for the mountain as fast as we could. We had not gone quite a mile before they found out that we had tricked them. They made all possible speed to overhual us. We had about three-fourths of a mile start of them, and about a mile further to make, so we

improved the time right royally, and if two young fellows ever got there we did. None too soon did we get to the mountain either, as they were but a short distance away, and after we had got within a few hundred feet from the foot of the mountain we could well bid defiance to them all, for the mountain was steep and hard of ascent for a man let alone a horse. Soon we went back to where we left the scouts, or Lieutenant Housley and his men.

The next day we all started across the mountain again, and we all thought we were on our way to Knoxville, but it seemed that these Union men wanted some satisfaction, for as soon as we got over into Sullivan county where all of the rebels lived, and who had been over so many times to capture them, they were bent on taking all of the home guards that they could and make them take the oath of allegiance to our government.

It seemed that the home of the old colonel of the home guards, or guerillas, was the first place that I came to. It was about eight o'clock at night. Here we found a double log block house and in the west end of this house sat the old colonel on the floor, playing with a young grandchild. There were five or six of our men at the door and several at the windows, and before we gave the old man any warning the men broke the door in and took the old man by surprise, but just as soon as the colonel got to his feet he had a gun in hand, that hung on a couple of pegs, and there were several other guns hanging around the house and standing in the corners. The old man struggled to avoid being taken, but at last submitted. The pleading on the part of his wife and daughter was pitiful and heart-rending, but in spite of their tears and pleadings we started in the direction of the mountain. We securely tied the old man's hands behind him with a rope, and then tied another some ten feet long to that,

and they had the Andersonville prisoner, as they chose to call me, lead the old man. He swore a good deal and was very surly about being led, but he had to go just the same. When we came to a piece of woods the scouts came to a halt and run the old man under a large low-limbed tree. The rope that was tied to his hands was untied and a noose placed around his neck. The rope was then thrown over a large limb and the rebel was commanded to say his prayers before they strung him up. Then it was that the old man knew his time was short. Well, to tell the truth, this made me feel sad and almost sick to see an enemy hung after taking him prisoner, although it was often done by the rebels to our men. As soon as the old man began to plead very hard they gave him his choice of either taking the oath of allegiance or dangle at the end of the rope, so he took the oath of allegiance. Then we all went to others of the home guards and got hold of a large number of them and made them all take the oath of allegiance to our government.

After this we went to a large plantation and here we found the folks had left with the rebel army, leaving the plantation in charge of an old darkey and his wench. These two old colored people the boys compelled to bake biscuit and hoeecake for nearly three hours. We found a large bee hive full of honey in the loft of the smoke house, and nearly one hundred weight of butter, and here around the old planter's table we sat and ate until we all felt very much satisfied. Then we all retired for the night, lying down in whatever beds we could find to occupy. In one of these beds I found over forty yards of sheep's gray cloth, which was worth at this time over five dollars a yard in gold. This I took back across the mountain and gave it to Lieutenant Houslev's wife, and out of this cloth Mrs. Housley made me

a nice pair of gray pants, the first pair I had been able to wear for a long time.

Now the time had come for us to go in the direction of Knoxville. There had been some of Colonel Kirk's scouts about fifty in number, who had come to help our boys in reaching our lines, so we started. Most all of our men were mounted on good, fleet horses. Lieutenant Housley had a nice little black mare that he let me have to ride. All the men in this company would number about eighty-five men. There were some seventy mounted men and in the neighborhood of fifteen footmen. Some of these footmen were young boys, going to Knoxville to keep out of the rebel army. There was one or two rebel deserters along with us. We had been traveling a part of one night and one day along the line of railroad, when we came to a school house, or church, I don't just remember which, and camped for the night. Along the way we had captured a rebel spy, who pretended to be a good Union man, and our boys let him go. He had not been gone more than two or three hours before there came a report from the guard lines that we were surrounded by at least four or five hundred rebels. This was about eleven o'clock at night, so the scouts all fell in and made a dash in the direction of the mountains. Our men were successful in breaking through the rebel lines, which let all of us footmen into the mountains. There were sixteen of us besides the pilot, who was left with us. We got high up into the mountains between two large bluffs and here we stayed that night, or the balance of it.

The next morning found us very hungry, for we had not had much to eat for about two days. I want to say that our boys had a very sharp and hard time to get through these rebel lines, and some of the rebels must have fell under the fire of the scouts.

About noon, or somewhere near that time, the pilot came to the conclusion that he would take one of our crew and go and try and get something for us to eat. So he started off in the direction of the valley. He had not been gone long before I took one of the young men and started off on my own hook, to see what success I would have, and we started down in about the same direction. We came to where the rebels were in pursuit of us and we went near the building where our boys had previously had their troubles with the rebels.

We went some two miles farther into the valley, where there was a large house standing on a very large plantation. At this house we got a large hoe cake, or a baked kettle cake of corn bread and some bacon and started back.

As we were passing the place where we had had the trouble with the rebels, what was our surprise to see two mounted rebels coming in our direction. Now I knew it was all up with us unless we could get ready for them in some way, so I told the young man to stoop down and get hold of anything that looked like a weapon and we would make a bold dash at them. There was a large thorn bush hedge between the rebels and us. We made a very sudden movement toward this hedge, holding short sticks in our hands, and called to them to surrender, when they turned their steeds and started off in the direction they had come. We made all the speed that we could, and soon found our way back to our concealment.

We all had a good lunch of corn bread and bacon and were ready to start again that night. We had to keep along the range of mountains, for we did not dare to follow the line of railroad for a while, for fear of the enemy. At this time we were about one hundred and twenty miles from Knoxville, Tennessee.

After starting again on our journey there was a woman pilot sent by Lieutenant Housley to help us along these mountain ranges, and, oh, such rugged, rocky cliffs that we had to climb, and such tired and aching limbs that we had during such nights of toiling up those mountains! It is something that I can never forget.

Well, as the distance grew less between the boys in blue and myself, my heart began to gladden and every night now began to tell on the distance. Oh, what thoughts I had of the folks at home, and how I longed to see the playgrounds of my boyhood days!

After the third night our guide left us to traverse the rest of our journey without her and we at this time were following the railroad line to our final destination at Knoxville.

We were about thirty-five miles away the last night of our travel, and we had got very hungry. I had slipped ahead of the boys to see if I could not get some hoecake before the rest of them came up. I had advanced ahead about three miles, and had come to a large block house, about half a mile south of the railroad. I went up to the door and looked in an old stile window. In the east end of the house was a fireplace, and close to this was a half dozen pairs of boots, while in the corner sat as many guns. I stood there a short time, when I knocked on the door. Presently there was a gruff voice which demanded to know who was there. I told him I wanted some hoecake. He again demanded a knowledge of me as to who was there. I told him that I was a friend. Soon he told the men who were on the floor to get up in haste, and when I saw that they were all getting up, I ran about seventy rods in the direction of the railroad. Here I waited until the boys came up and I told them what had happened. The old pilot concluded to try and make them all surrender, but in this we

were mistaken, for we could not make them do so. They seemed to be desperate in regard to giving up their arms, so we had to abandon the idea of taking them. We all started on again to finish up our journey.

There was nothing of any importance which occurred the balance of the way. The next day we arrived at the Knoxville river. Here we found the railroad bridge was gone, and there were ferry boats to take the people over the river. When I saw the stars and stripes once more I shed tears of joy to think I had arrived into our lines, and I had great reasons to thank God for His deliverance from worse than death in those prison hells.

Here I was taken to the commander's headquarters, and I told him something of the privations I had gone through. and after I had been given some dinner I was taken to the sanitary commission department. Here I found an old man by the name of David Scott. He was assistant surgeon of the Hastings hospital of Knoxville. This old man took me to the sanitary commission where I was given a fine suit of navy blue clothes and a hat with an eagle on one side. Oh, how grand this made me feel to get a good warm suit of clothes on once more and to be free.

The next day I was given a pass to go to Washington, and how glad I was to take the train in the direction of home. I started and every eastern bound train that I could get on to without asking any questions I would get on, until I finally found myself in New York City.

Then the next place I found myself was in Pittsburg Pennsylvania, within ninety miles of home. Here I was accosted by a provost marshal, who asked me where I was from. I told him. Well he concluded that I had been taking a very good pleasure trip at the government's expense. He put me aboard the train and started me for Harrisburg.

and when I arrived there I met my old colonel, Chauncey Rodgers, whom I found at the Soldiers' Rest. He induced me to go to the state capitol at Harrisburg. Here he introduced me to Maribee Lowery, a state senator of Pennsylvania. Here I was seated above all of the leading senators and related the story of my escape, while a shorthand writer wrote it down as fast as I could tell it.

After I had sat and told the story of my escape for nearly three hours a doctor came to me and felt of my pulse and told Mr. Lowery that if he intended to do anything for me he must do it soon, for he told him I was coming down with some fever. Now Mr. Lowery gave me a letter of introduction to the adjutant general of the war department, and the next day after I got to Washington I received a thirty-five days' furlough to go home.

Mr. Lowery told me when I came back by the way of Baltimore and completed the tale of my escape that he would give me five hundred dollars in gold. Now when I started from Washington and got on the train I found an old man who had been at the Howard hospital at Washington, and who had buried a son and had just started for home. I told him where I lived when at home, and found that he lived about thirty miles from Waterford, Erie county, Pennsylvania. This old man took care of me until I reached home.

When I got to Harrisburg I was so sick that I did not know what was going on around me, and when I arrived at the station at Waterford it was along about the last days of January. The snow was about two feet deep and drifted for a distance of some two miles from the station to a depth of ten feet. I got into a box car and remained in my old friend's care some two hours, while an old lady went two miles over some terribly deep drifts to notify the stage driver of the condition I was in.

During this time the good old man had tried to get me into some Irish shanties near the station, but without any success. I still remained in this cold car until my feet were badly frozen, and when the stage did come there came with it a man by the name of Clifford Stafford, a distant relative, if any, who had been discharged on account of wounds received in the Battle of Gainsey's Mill or Hall's Hill. Now, when I got home I never knew my own folks for five long weeks, and when I did bring myself through I did not have a spear of hair on my head, nor did I have hardly any soles on my feet, so badly were they frozen while escaping and being exposed to so much snow and frost.

This tale may not be so interesting to many on account of its being so long since the close of the war, but nevertheless it is a true story.

Oh, how sad is the memory of the past! If my faith was all I had in this world I should consider myself most miserable, but I thank God that while I still continue to suffer, my faith is in Him.

When I got well I learned that my folks had made ready to have funeral services for me, as Comrade Ledierer had sent word to them that I was killed way back there at the negro shanty, at which place we were separated from each other.

Now the time had come for me to return to Washington General Lee's army had surrendered, and my time of service had nearly expired and my furlough also.

At last the day came when I bid my kind old mother and friends good bye and once more started to join the army.

My desire now was to continue the tale of my escape from prison to the Senator from Pennsylvania, and get the gold he had promised to give me, but when I got to Harrisburg, I found that he had been taken ill and had been sent

to an insane asylum, and while there had died, at least that was the report at that time.

Soon after I got to Washington we were all mustered out of service and sent home.

While I was on my way to Washington, and while in Baltimore waiting for a train to go to Washington, there was a guard who attempted to arrest me. I had been home three months, under a doctor's care, and of course my furlough of thirty-five days had expired, but I had a sworn certificate from the doctor and a pass from the provost marshal of the place where I lived, but this did not suit the guard, who was bent on taking me for desertion.

After twenty-five years had expired I got my ransom money from Uncle Sam on account of that guard at Baltimore keeping my furlough.

Now this ends the tale of my escape from rebel prisons, and since all of this prison suffering I have lived in Oceana county, Michigan, and have reared up a family of five children, one boy dying at the age of thirteen years. I have had both shoulders broken, my right shoulder blade, right arm and left hip misplaced and broken, and also my left leg below the knee, and am now left almost a total cripple.

This ends the short tale of suffering, but suffering not ended until this life is closed.

IN DEFENSE OF THE FLAG.



A TRUE WAR STORY

(ILLUSTRATED.)

A Pen Picture of Scenes and Incidents during the
Great Rebellion.—Thrilling Experiences During
Escape from Southern Prisons, Etc.

By DAVID W. STAFFORD.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 006 044 089 A